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CAPTAIN SPIKE;

OR,

THE ISLETS OF THE GULF.

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BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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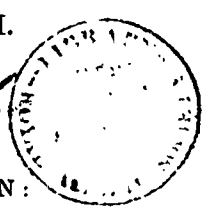

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CAPTAIN SPIKE;

OR,

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CHAPTER VI.

At the piping of all hands,
When the judgment signal's spread—
When the islands and the lands,
And the seas give up their dead,
When the sinner is dismayed,
And the south and the north shall come;
And the just man is afraid,
Then heaven be thy aid,
Poor Tom! BRAINARD.

THE people had now a cessation from their toil. Of all the labour known to sea-faring men, that of pumping is usually thought to be the most severe. Those who work at it have to be relieved every minute, and it is only by having gangs to succeed each other that the duty can be done at all, with anything like

steadiness. In the present instance, it is true that the people of the Swash were sustained by the love of gold, but glad enough were they when Mulford called out to them to "knock off, and turn in for the night." It was high time this summons should be made, for not only were the people excessively wearied, but the customary hours of labour were so far spent, that the light of the moon had some time before begun to blend with the little left by the parting sun. Glad enough were all hands to quit the toil; and two minutes were scarcely elapsed ere most of the crew had thrown themselves down, and were buried in deep sleep. Even Spike and Mulford took the rest they needed, the cook alone being left to look out for the changes in the weather. In a word, everybody but this idler was exhausted with pumping and baling, and even gold had lost its power to charm, until nature was recruited by rest.

The excitement produced by the scenes through which they had so lately passed caused the females to sleep soundly too. The death-like stillness which pervaded the vessel con-

tributed to their rest, and Rose never woke, from the first few minutes after her head was on her pillow, until near four in the morning. The deep quiet seemed ominous to one who had so lately witnessed the calm which precedes the tornado, and she arose. In that low latitude and warm season few clothes were necessary, and our heroine was on deck in a very few minutes. Here she found the same grave-like sleep pervading everything. There was not a breath of air, and the ocean seemed to be in one of its profoundest slumbers. The hard-breathing of Spike could be heard through the open windows of his state-room, and this was positively the only sound that was audible. The common men, who lay scattered about the decks, more especially from the mainmast forward, seemed to be so many logs, and from Mulford no breathing was heard.

The morning was neither very dark, nor very light, it being easy to distinguish objects that were near, while those at a distance were necessarily lost in obscurity. Availing herself of the circumstance, Rose went as far as the gangway, to ascertain if the cook were at his

post. She saw him lying near his galley, in as profound a sleep as any of the crew. This she felt to be wrong, and she felt alarmed, though she knew not why. Perhaps it was the consciousness of being the only person up and awake at that hour of deepest night, in a vessel so situated as the Swash, and in a climate in which hurricanes seem to be the natural offspring of the air. Some one must be aroused; and her tastes, feelings, and judgment, all pointed to Harry Mulford as the person she ought to awaken. He slept habitually in his clothes—the lightest summer dress of the tropics; and the window of his little state-room was always open for air. Moving lightly to the place, Rose laid her own little soft hand on the arm of the young man, when the latter was on his feet in an instant. A single moment only was necessary to regain his consciousness, when Mulford left the state-room and joined Rose on the quarter-deck.

"Why am I called, Rose?" the young man asked, attempering his voice to the calm that reigned around him; "and why am I called by *you*?"

Rose explained the state of the brig, and the feeling which induced her to awaken him. With woman's gentleness she now expressed her regret for having robbed Harry of his rest—had she reflected a moment, she might have kept watch herself, and allowed him to obtain the sleep he must surely so much require.

But Mulford laughed at this; protested he had never been awoke at a more favourable moment, and would have sworn, had it been proper, that a minute's further sleep would have been too much for him. After these first explanations, Mulford walked round the decks, carefully felt how much strain there was on the purchases, and rejoined Rose to report that all was right, and that he did not consider it necessary to call even the cook. The black was an idler in no sense but that of keeping watch, and he had toiled the past day as much as any of the men, though it was not exactly at the pumps.

A long and a semi-confidential conversation now occurred between Harry and Rose. They talked of Spike, the brig, and her cargo, and of the delusion of the captain's widow. It was

scarcely possible that powder should be so much wanted at the Havannah as to render smuggling, at so much cost, a profitable adventure; and Mulford admitted his convictions that the pretended flour was originally intended for Mexico. Rose related the tenor of the conversation she had overheard between the two parties, Don Juan and Don Esteban, and the mate no longer doubted that it was Spike's intention to sell the brig to the enemy. She also alluded to what had passed between herself and the stranger.

Mulford took this occasion to introduce the subject of Jack Tier's intimacy and favour with Rose. He even professed to feel some jealousy on account of it, little as there might be to alarm most men in the rivalry of such a competitor. Rose laughed, as girls will laugh when there is question of their power over the other sex, and she fairly shook her rich tresses as she declared her determination to continue to smile on Jack to the close of the voyage. Then, as if she had said more than she intended, she added, with woman's generosity and tenderness,—

"After all, Harry, you know how much I promised to you even before we sailed, and how much more since, and have no just cause to dread even Jack. There is another reason, however, that ought to set your mind entirely at ease on his account. Jack is married, and has a partner living at this very moment, as he does not scruple to avow himself."

A hissing noise, a bright light, and a slight explosion, interrupted the half-laughing girl, and Mulford, turning on his heel, quick as thought, saw that a rocket had shot up into the air from a point close under the bows of the brig. He was still in the act of moving toward the forecastle, when, at the distance of several leagues, he saw the explosion of another rocket high in the air. He knew enough of the practices of vessels of war to feel certain that these were a signal and its answer from some one in the service of government. Not at all sorry to have the career of the Swash arrested before she could pass into hostile hands, or before evil could befal Rose, Mulford reached the forecastle just in time to answer the inquiry that was immediately put to him in the way of a

hail. A gig, pulling four oars only, with two officers in its stern-sheets, was fairly under the vessel's bows, and the mate could almost distinguish the countenance of the officer who questioned him, the instant he showed his head and shoulders above the bulwarks.

"What vessels are these?" demanded the stranger, speaking in the authoritative manner of one who acted for the state, but not speaking much above the usual conversational tone.

"American and Spanish," was the answer. "This brig is American—the schooner alongside is a Spaniard, that turned turtle in a tornado about six-and-thirty hours since, and on which we have been hard at work, trying to raise her, since the gale which succeeded the tornado has blown its pipe out."

"Ay, ay, that's the story, is it? I did not know what to make of you lying cheek-by-jowl in this fashion. Was anybody lost on board the schooner?"

"All hands, including every soul aft and forward, the supercargo excepted, who happened to be a-board here. We buried seventeen bodies this afternoon on the smallest of

the Keys that you see near at hand, and two this morning alongside of the light. But what boat is that, and where are *you* from, and whom are you signalling?"

"The boat is a gig," answered the stranger deliberately, "and she belongs to a cruizer of Uncle Sam's, that is off the reef, a short bit to the eastward, and we signalled our captain. But I'll come on board you, sir, if you please."

Mulford walked aft to meet the stranger at the gangway, and was relieved, rather than otherwise, at finding that Spike was already on the quarter-deck. Should the vessel of war seize the brig, he could rejoice at it; but, so strong were his professional ideas of duty to the craft he sailed in, that he did not find it in his heart to say aught against her. Were any mishap to befal it, or were justice to be done, he preferred that it might be done under Spike's own supervision rather than under his own.

"Call all hands, Mr. Mulford," said Spike, as they met. "I see a streak of day coming yonder in the east—let all hands be called at once. What strange boat is this we have alongside?"

This question was put to the strangers, Spike standing on his gangway ladder to ask it, while the mate was summoning the crew. The officer saw that a new person was to be dealt with, and in his quiet, easy way, he answered, while stretching out his hands to take the man-rope,—

"Your servant, sir;—we are man-of-war's men, belonging to one of Uncle Sam's craft outside, and have just come in to pay you a visit of ceremony. I told one, whom I suppose was your mate, that I would just come on board of you."

"Ay, ay,—one at a time, if you please. It's war-time, and I cannot suffer armed boats' crews to board me at night, without knowing something about them. Come up yourself, if you please, but order your people to stay in the boat. Here, muster about this gangway, half-a-dozen of you, and keep an eye on the crew of this strange boat."

These orders had no effect on the cool and deliberate lieutenant, who ascended the brig's side, and immediately stood on her deck. No sooner had he and Spike confronted each other,

than each gave a little start, like that of recognition, and the lieutenant spoke,—

"Ay, ay—I believe I know this vessel now. It is the Molly Swash, of New York, bound to Key West, and a market; and I have the honour to see Captain Stephen Spike again."

It was Mr. Wallace, the second lieutenant of the sloop-of-war, that had boarded the brig in the Mona Passage, and to avoid whom Spike had gone to the southward of Jamaica. The meeting was very *mal-à-propos*, but it would not do to betray that the captain and owner of the vessel thought as much as this; on the contrary, Wallace was warmly welcomed, and received not only as an old acquaintance, but as a very agreeable visiter. To have seen the two, as they walked aft together, one might have supposed that the meeting was conducive of nothing but a very mutual satisfaction,—it was so much like that which happens between those who keep up a hearty acquaintance.

"Well, I'm glad to see you again, Captain Spike," cried Wallace, after the greetings were passed, "if it be only to ask where you flew to the day we left you in the Mona Passage. We

look'd out for you with all our eyes, expecting you would be down between San Domingo and Jamaica; but I hardly think you got by us in the night. Our master thinks you must have dove, and gone past loon-fashion. Do you ever perform that manœuvre?"

"No, we've kept above water the whole time, lieutenant," answered Spike heartily; "and that is more than can be said of the poor fellow alongside of us. I was so much afraid of the Isle of Pines, that I went round Jamaica."

"You might have given the Isle of Pines a berth, and still have passed to the northward of the Englishmen," said Wallace, a little drily. "However, that island *is* somewhat of a scare-crow, and we have been to take a look at it ourselves. All's right there just now. But you seem light; what have you done with your flour?"

"Parted with every barrel of it. You may remember I was bound to Key West, and a market. Well, I found my market here, in American waters."

"You have been lucky, sir. This 'emporium' does not seem to be exactly a *commercial* emporium."

"The fact is, the flour is intended for the Havannah; and I fancy it is to be shipped for slavers. But I am to know nothing of all that, you'll understand, lieutenant. If I sell my flour in American waters, at two prices, it's no concern of mine what becomes of it a'terwards."

"Unless it happen to pass into enemy's hands, certainly not; and you are too patriotic to deal with Mexico just now, I'm sure. Pray, did that flour go down when the schooner turned turtle?"

Every barrel of it; but Don Wan, below there, thinks that most of it may yet be saved, by landing it on one of those keys to dry. Flour, well packed, wets in slowly. You see we have some of it on deck."

"And who may Don Wan be, sir, pray? We are sent here to look after Dons and Doñas, you know."

"Don Wan is a Cuban merchant, and deals in such articles as he wants. I fell in with him among the reefs here, where he was rummaging about in hopes of meeting with a wreck, he tells me, and thinking to purchase

something profitable in that way; but, finding I had flour, he agreed to take it out of me at this anchorage, and send me away in ballast at once. I have found Don Wan Montefalderon ready pay, and very honourable."

Wallace then requested an explanation of the disaster; to the details of which he listened with a sailor's interest. He asked a great many questions, all of which bore on the more nautical features of the event, and day having now fairly appeared, he examined the purchases and backings of the Swash with professional nicety. The schooner was no lower in the water than when the men had knocked off work the previous night; and Spike set the people at the pumps and their baling again, as the most effectual method of preventing their making any indiscreet communications to the men-of-war's men.

About this time the relict appeared on deck, when Spike gallantly introduced the lieutenant anew to his passengers. It is true he knew no name to use; but that was of little moment, as he called the officer "the lieutenant," and nothing else.

Mrs. Budd was delighted with this occasion to show off, and she soon broke out on the easy, indolent, but waggish Wallace, in a strain to surprise him, notwithstanding the specimen of the lady's skill from which he had formerly escaped.

"Captain Spike is of opinion, lieutenant, that our cast-anchor here is excellent, and I know the value of a good cast-anchor place; for my poor Mr. Budd was a seafaring man, and taught me almost as much of your noble profession as he knew himself."

"And he taught you, ma'am," said Wallace, fairly opening his eyes under the influence of astonishment, "to be very particular about cast-anchor places!"

"Indeed he did. He used to say, that roads-instead were never as good for such purposes as land that's locked havens, for the anchors would return home, as he called it, in roads-insteads."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Wallace, looking very queer at first, as if disposed to laugh outright, then catching a glance of Rose, and changing his mind; "I perceive that Mr. Budd

knew what he was about, and preferred an anchorage where he was well land-locked, and where there was no danger of his anchors coming home, as so often happens in your open roadsteads."

"Yes; that's just it! That was just his notion! You cannot feel how delightful it is, Rose, to converse with one that thoroughly understands such subjects! My poor Mr. Budd did, indeed, denounce roads-instead, at all times calling them 'savage.'"

"Savage, aunt," put in Rose, hoping to stop the good relict by her own interposition—"that is a strange word to apply to an anchorage!"

"Not at all, young lady," said Wallace gravely. "They are often *wild* berths, and wild berths are not essentially different from wild beasts. Each is savage as a matter of course."

"I knew I was right!" exclaimed the widow. "Savage cast-anchors come of wild births, as do savage Indians. Oh! the language of the ocean, as my poor Mr. Budd used to say, is eloquence tempered by common sense!"

Wallace stared again; but his attention was called to other things just at that moment.

The appearance of Don Juan Montefalderon y Castro on deck reminded him of his duty, and approaching that gentleman, he condoled with him on the grave loss he had sustained. After a few civil expressions on both sides, Wallace made a delicate allusion to the character of the schooner.

"Under other circumstances," he said, it might be my duty to inquire a little particularly as to the nationality of your vessel, Señor, for we are at war with the Mexicans, as you doubtless know."

"Certainly," answered Don Juan, with an unmoved air and great politeness of manner, "though it would be out of my power to satisfy you. Everything was lost in the schooner, and I have not a paper of any sort to show you. If it be your pleasure to make a prize of a vessel in this situation, certainly it is in your power to do it. A few barrels of wet flour are scarce worth disputing about."

Wallace now seemed a little ashamed, the *sang froid* of the other throwing dust in his eyes, and he was in a hurry to change the subject. Señor Don Juan was very civilly con-

doled with again, and he was made to repeat the incidents of the loss, as if his auditor took a deep interest in what he said; but no further hint was given touching the nationality of the vessel. The lieutenant's tact let him see that Señor Montefalderon was a person of a very different calibre from Spike, as well as of different habits, and he did not choose to indulge in the quiet irony that formed so large an ingredient in his own character, with this new acquaintance. He spoke Spanish himself with tolerable fluency, and a conversation now occurred between the two, which was maintained for some time with spirit, and a very manifest courtesy.

This dialogue between Wallace and the Spaniard gave Spike a little leisure for reflection. As the day advanced the cruiser came more and more plainly in view, and his first business was to take a good survey of her. She might have been three leagues distant; but approaching with a very light breeze, at the rate of something less than two knots in the hour. Unless there was some one on board her who was acquainted with the channels of

the Dry Tortugas, Spike felt little apprehension of the ship getting very near to him; but he very well understood that, with the sort of artillery that was in modern use among vessels of war, he would hardly be safe could the cruiser get within a league. That near Uncle Sam's craft might certainly come without encountering the hazards of the channels, and within that distance she would be likely to get in the course of the morning, should he have the complaisance to wait for her. He determined, therefore, not to be guilty of that act of folly.

All this time the business of lightening the schooner proceeded. Although Mulford earnestly wished that the man-of-war might get an accurate notion of the true character and objects of the brig, he could not prevail on himself to become an informer. In order to avoid the temptation so to do, he exerted himself in keeping the men at their tasks; and never before had pumping and baling been carried on with more spirit. The schooner soon floated of herself, and the purchases which led to the Swash were removed. Near a hundred more

barrels of the flour had been taken out of the hold of the Spanish craft, and had been struck on the deck of the brig, or sent to the Key by means of the boats. This made a material change in the buoyancy of the vessel, and enabled the baling to go on with greater facility. The pumps were never idle; but two small streams of water were running the whole time toward the scuppers, and through them into the sea.

At length the men were ordered to knock off, and to get their breakfasts. This appeared to arouse Wallace, who had been chatting, quite agreeably to himself, with Rose, and seemed reluctant to depart, but who now became sensible that he was neglecting his duty. He called away his boat's crew, and took a civil leave of the passengers; after which he went over the side. The gig was some little distance from the Swash, when Wallace rose, and asked to see Spike, with whom he had a word to say at parting.

"I will soon return" he said, "and bring you forty or fifty fresh men, who will make light work with your wreck. I am certain our

commander will consent to my doing so, and will gladly send on board you two or three boats' crews."

"If I let him," muttered Spike between his teeth, "I shall be a poor, miserable cast-anchor devil, that's all."

To Wallace, however, he expressed his hearty acknowledgments; begged him not to be in a hurry, as the worst was now over, and the row was still a long one. If he got back toward evening it would be all in good time. Wallace waved his hand, and the gig glided away. As for Spike, he sat down on the plank-sheer where he had stood, and remained there ruminating intently for two or three minutes. When he descended to the deck his mind was fully made up. His first act was to give some private orders to the boatswain; after which he withdrew to the cabin, whither he summoned Tier without delay.

"Jack," commenced the captain, using very little circumlocution in opening his mind, "you and I are old shipmates, and ought to be old friends, though I think your natur' has undergone some changes since we last met. Twenty

years ago there was no man in the ship on whom I could so certainly depend as on Jack Tier; now you seem given up altogether to the women. Your mind has changed even more than your body."

"Time does that for all of us, Captain Spike," returned Tier coolly. "I *am* not what I used to be, I'll own, nor are you yourself, for that matter. When I saw you last, noble captain, you were a handsome man of forty, and could go aloft with any youngster in the brig; but now you're heavy, and not over active."

"I!—Not a bit of change has taken place in me for the last thirty years. I defy any man to show the contrary. But that's neither here nor there; you are no young woman, Jack, that I need be boasting of my health and beauty before you. I want a bit of real sarvice from you, and want it done in old-time's fashion; and I mean to pay for it in old-time's fashion too."

As Spike concluded, he put into Tier's hand one of the doubloons that he had received from Señor Montefalderon in payment for the powder. The doubloons, for which so much pump-

ing and baling were then in process, were still beneath the waters of the gulf.

"Ay, ay, sir," returned Jack, smiling and pocketing the gold, with a wink of the eye, and a knowing look; "this does resemble old times sum'at. I now begin to know Captain Spike, my old commander again, and see that he's more like himself than I had just thought him. What am I to do for this, sir; speak plain that I may be sartain to steer the true course."

"Oh, just a trifle, jack,—nothing that will break up the ground-tier of your wits, my old shipmate. You see the state of the brig, and know that she is in no condition for ladies."

"'Twould have been better all round, sir, had they never come aboard at all," answered Jack, looking dark.

Spike was surprised, but he was too much bent on his projects to heed trifles.

"You know what sort of flour they're whipping out of the schooner, and must understand that the brig will soon be in a pretty litter. I do not intend to let them send a single barrel of it beneath my hatches again; but the deck and the islands must take it all. Now, I wish

to relieve my passengers from the confinement this will occasion, and I have ordered the boatswain to pitch a tent for them on the largest of these here Tortugas; and, what I want of you, is to muster food and water, and other woman's knickknacks, and go ashore with them, and make them as comfortable as you can for a few days, or until we can get this schooner loaded and off."

Jack Tier looked at his commander as if he would penetrate his most secret thoughts. A short pause succeeded, during which the steward's mate was intensely musing; then his countenance suddenly brightened; he gave the doubloon a fillip, and caught it on the palm of his hand as it descended, and he uttered the customary "Ay, ay, sir," with apparent cheerfulness. Nothing more passed between these two worthies, who now parted, Jack to make his arrangements, and Spike to "tell his yarn," —as he termed the operation in his own mind, to Mrs. Budd, Rose, and Biddy. The widow listened complacently, though she seemed half doubting, half ready to comply. As for Rose, she received the proposal with delight—the

confinement of the vessel having become irksome to her. The principal obstacle was in overcoming the difficulties made by the aunt, Biddy appearing to like the notion quite as much as "Miss Rosy." As for the lighthouse, Mrs. Budd had declared that nothing would induce her to go there; for she did not doubt that the place would soon be, if it were not already, haunted. In this opinion she was sustained by Biddy; and it was the knowledge of this opinion that induced Spike to propose the tent.

"Are you sure, Captain Spike, it is not a desert island?" asked the widow; "I remember that my poor Mr. Budd always spoke of desert islands as horrid places, and spots that every one should avoid."

"What if it is, aunty," said Rose eagerly, "while we have the brig here, close at hand. We shall suffer none of the wants of such a place, so long as our friends can supply us."

"And *such* friends, Miss Rose!" exclaimed Spike, a little sentimentally for him,—"friends that would undergo hunger and thirst themselves before you should want for any comforts."

"Do, now, Madam Budd," put in Biddy, in her hearty way; "it 's an island, ye 'il remimber; and sure that 's what ould Ireland has ever been, God bless it! Islands make the pleasantest residences."

"Well, I 'll venture to oblige you and Biddy, Rosy dear," returned the aunt, still half reluctant to yield; "but, you 'll remember, that if I find it at all a desert island, I 'll not pass the night on it on any account whatever."

With this understanding the party was transferred to the shore. The boatswain had already erected a sort of a tent, on a favourable spot, using some of the old sails that had covered the flour-barrels, not only for the walls, but for a carpet of some extent also. This tent was ingeniously enough contrived. In addition to the little room that was entirely enclosed, there was a sort of piazza, or open verandah, which would enable its tenants to enjoy the shade in the open air. Beneath this verandah a barrel of fresh water was placed, as well as three or four ship's stools, all of which had been sent ashore with the materials for constructing the tent. The boat had been going and coming

for some time, and, the distance being short, the "desert island" was soon a desert no longer. It is true that the supplies necessary to support three women for as many days were no great matter, and were soon landed; but Jack Tier had made a provision somewhat more ample. A capital caterer—he had forgotten nothing within the compass of his means that could contribute to the comfort of those who had been put especially under his care. Long before the people "knocked off" for their dinners the arrangements were completed and the boatswain was ready to take his leave.

"Well, ladies," said that grum old salt, "I can do no more for you, as I can see. This here island is now almost as comfortable as a ship that has been in blue water for a month, and I don't know how it can be made more comfortabler."

This was only according to the boatswain's notion of comfort; but Rose thanked him for his care in her winning way, while her aunt admitted that, "for a place that was almost a desert island, things did look somewhat promising." In a few minutes the men were all

gone, and the islet was left to the sole possession of the three females and their constant companier, Jack Tier. Rose was pleased with the novelty of her situation, though the islet certainly did deserve the opprobrium of being a "desert island." There was no shade but that of the tent, and its verandah-like covering, though the last, in particular, was quite extensive. There was no water, that in the barrel and that of the ocean excepted. Of herbage there was a very little on this islet, and that was of the most meagre and coarse character, being a long wiry grass, with here and there a few stunted bushes. The sand was reasonably firm, however, more especially round the shore, and the walking was far from unpleasant. Little did Rose know it, but a week earlier, the spot would have been next to intolerable to her, on account of the musquitoes, gallinippers, and other similar insects of the family of tormentors, but every thing of the sort had temporarily disappeared in the currents of the tornado. To do Spike justice, he was aware of this circumstance, or he might have hesitated about exposing females to the ordinary

annoyances of one of these spots. Not a musquito, or any thing of the sort was left, however, all having gone to leeward, in the vortex which had come so near sweeping off the Mexican schooner.

"This place will do very well, aunty, for a day or two," cried Rose cheerfully, as she returned from a short excursion, and threw aside her hat, one made to shade her face from the sun of a warm climate, leaving the sea-breeze, that was just beginning to blow, to fan her blooming and sunny cheeks. "It is better than the brig. The worst piece of land is better than the brig."

"Do not say that, Rose—not if it 's a desert island, dear; and this is desperately like a desert island; I am almost sorry I ventured on it."

"It will not be deserted by us, aunty, until we shall see occasion to do so. Why not endeavour to get on board of yonder ship, and return to New York in *her;* or at least induce her captai put us ashore somewhere near this, and go home by land. Your health never seemed better than it at this moment; and

as for mine, I do assure you, aunty dear, I am as perfectly well as I ever was in my life."

"All from this voyage. I knew it would set you up, and am delighted to hear you say as much. Biddy and I were talking of you this very morning, my child, and we both agreed that you *were* getting to be yourself again. Oh, ships, and brigs, and schooners, full-jigger or half-jigger, for pulmonary complaints, says I! My poor Mr. Budd always maintained that the ocean was the cure for all diseases, and I determined that to sea you should go, the moment I became alarmed for your health."

The good widow loved Rose most tenderly, and she was obliged to use her handkerchief to dry the tears from her eyes as she concluded. Those tears sprang equally from a past feeling of apprehension, and a present feeling of gratitude. Rose saw this, and she took a seat at her aunt's side, touched herself, as she never failed to be on similar occasions, with this proof of her relative's affection. At that moment even Harry Mulford would have lost a good deal in her kind feelings toward him, had he so much as smiled at one of the widow's

nautical absurdities. At such times, Rose seemed to be her aunt's guardian and protectress, instead of reversing the relations, and she entirely forget herself the many reasons which existed for wishing that she had been placed in childhood under the care of one better qualified than the well-meaning relict of her uncle, for the performance of her duties.

"Thank you, aunty—thank'ee, dear aunty," said Rose, kissing the widow affectionately. "I know that you mean the best for me, though you *are* a little mistaken in supposing me ill. I do assure you, dear," patting her aunt's cheek, as if she herself had been merely a playful child, "I never was better; and if I *have* been pulmonary, I am entirely cured, and am now ready to return home."

"God be praised for this, Rosy. Under *His* divine providence, it is all owing to the sea. If you really feel so much restored, however, I do not wish to keep you a moment longer on a ship's board than is necessary. We owe something to Captain Spike's care, and cannot quit him too unceremoniously; but as soon as he is at liberty to go into a harbour, I will engage

him to do so, and we can return home by land —unless, indeed, the brig intends to make the home voyage herself."

"I do not like this brig, aunty, and now we are out of her, I wish we could keep out of her. Nor do I like your Captain Spike, who seems to me anything but an agreeable gentleman."

That's because you ar'n't accustomed to the sea. My poor Mr. Budd had *his* ways, like all the rest of them; it takes time to get acquainted with them. All sailors are so."

Rose bent her face involuntarily, but so low as to conceal the increasing brightness of her native bloom, as she answered,—

"Harry Mulford is not so, aunty dear—and he is every inch a sailor."

"Well, there *is* a difference, I must acknowledge, though I dare say Harry will grow every day more and more like all the rest of them. In the end, he will resemble Captain Spike."

"Never," said Rose firmly.

"You can't tell, child. I never saw your uncle when he was Harry's age, for I was n't born till he was thirty; but often and often has

he pointed out to me some slender, genteel youth, and say, 'just such a lad was I at twenty,' though nothing could be less alike, at the moment he was speaking, than they two. We all change with our years. Now I was once as slender, and almost—not quite, Rosy, for few there are that be—but *almost* as handsome as yourself."

"Yes, aunty, I've heard that before," said Rose, springing up, in order to change the discourse; "but Harry Mulford will never become like Stephen Spike. I wish we had never known the man, dearest aunty."

"It was all your own doings, child. He's a cousin of your most intimate friend, and she brought him to the house; and one could n't offend Mary Mulford by telling her we did n't like her cousin."

Rose seemed vexed, and she kept her little foot in motion, patting the sail that formed the carpet, as girls will pat the ground with their feet when vexed. This gleam of displeasure was soon over, however, and her countenance became as placid as the clear blue sky that formed the vault of the heavens about her head.

As if to atone for the passing rebellion of her feelings, she threw her arms around her aunt's neck; after which she walked away along the beach, ruminating on her present situation, and of the best means of extricating their party from the power of Spike.

It requires great familiarity with vessels and the seas, for one to think, read, and pursue the customary train of reasoning on board a ship that one has practised ashore. Rose had felt this embarrassment during the past month, for the whole of which time she had scarcely been in a condition to act up to her true character, suffering her energies, and in some measure, her faculties, to be drawn into the vortex produced by the bustle, novelties, and scenes of the vessel and the ocean. But now she was once more on the land, diminutive and naked as was the islet that composed her present world, and she found leisure and solitude for reflection and decision. She was not ignorant of the nature of a vessel of war, or of the impropriety of unprotected females placing themselves on board of one; but gentlemen of character, like the officers of the ship in sight,

could hardly be wanting in the feelings of their caste; and anything was better than to return voluntarily within the power of Spike. She determined within her own mind that voluntarily she would not. We shall leave this young girl, slowly wandering along the beach of her islet, musing on matters like these, while we return to the vessels and the mariners.

A good breeze had come in over the reef from the gulf, throwing the sloop-of-war dead to leeward of the brigantine's anchorage. This was the reason that the former had closed so slowly. Still the distance between the vessels was so small, that a swift cruizer, like the ship-of-war, would soon have been alongside of the wreckers, but for the intervening islets and the intricacies of their channels. She had made sail on the wind, however, and was evidently disposed to come as near to the danger as her lead showed would be safe, even if she did not venture among them.

Spike noted all these movements, and he took his measures accordingly. The pumping and baling had been going on since the appearance of light, and the flour had been quite half

removed from the schooner's hold. That vessel consequently floated with sufficient buoyancy, and no further anxiety was felt on account of her sinking. Still a great deal of water remained in her, the cabin itself being nearly half full. Spike's object was to reduce this water sufficiently to enable him to descend to the state-room which Señor Montefalderon had occupied, and bring away the doubloons that alone kept him in the vicinity of so ticklish a neighbour as the Poughkeepsie. Escape was easy enough to one who knew the passages of the reef and islets; more especially since the wind had so fortunately brought the cruiser to leeward. Spike most apprehended a movement upon him in the boats, and he had almost made up his mind, should such an enterprise be attempted, to try his hand in beating it off with his guns. A good deal of uncertainty on the subject of Mulford's consenting to resist the recognised authorities of the country, as well as some doubts of a similar nature in reference to two or three of the best of the foremast hands, alone left him in doubt as to the expediency of such a course. As no boats

were lowered from the cruiser, however, the necessity of resorting to so desperate a measure did not occur, and the duty of lightening the schooner had proceeded without interruption. As soon as the boatswain came off from the islet, he and the men with him were directed to take the hands, and lift the anchors, of which it will be remembered the Swash had several down. Even Mulford was shortly after set at work on the same duty; and these expert and ready seamen soon had the brig clear of the ground. As the schooner was anchored, and floated without assistance, the Swash rode by her.

Such was the state of things when the men turned to, after having had their dinners. By this time, the sloop-of-war was within half a league of the bay, her progress having been materially retarded by the set of the current, which was directly against her. Spike saw that a collision of some sort or other must speedily occur, and he determined to take the boatswain with him, and descend into the cabin of the schooner in quest of the gold. The boatswain was summoned, and Señor Montefal-

deron repeated in this man's presence, the instructions that he thought it necessary for the adventurers to follow, in order to secure the prize. Knowing how little locks would avail on board a vessel, were the men disposed to rob him, that gentleman had trusted more to secreting his treasure, than to securing it in the more ordinary way. When the story had again been told, Spike and his boatswain went on board the schooner, and, undressing, they prepared to descend into the cabin. The captain paused a single instant to take a look at the sloop-of-war, and to examine the state of the weather. It is probable some new impression was made on him by this inquiry, for, hailing Mulford, he ordered him to loosen the sails, and to sheet home, and hoist the foretopsail. In a word, "to see all ready to cast off, and to make sail on the brig at the shortest notice." With this command he disappeared by the schooner's companion-way.

Spike and his companion found the water in the cabin very much deeper than they had supposed. With a view to comfort, the cabin floor had been sunk much lower than is usual

on board American vessels, and this brought the water up nearly to the arm-pits of two men as short as our captain and his sturdy little boatswain. The former grumbled a good deal, when he ascertained the fact, and said something about the mate's being better fitted to make a search in such a place, but concluded with the remark, that "the man who wants ticklish duty well done, must see to it himself."

The gold-hunters groped their way cautiously about the cabin for some time, feeling for a drawer in which they had been told they should find the key of Señor Montefalderon's state-room door. In this Spike himself finally succeeded, he being much better acquainted with cabins and their fixtures, than the boatswain.

"Here it is, Ben," said the captain; "now for a dive among the Don's val'ables. Should you pick up anything worth speaking of, you can condemn it for salvage, as I mean to cast off, and quit the wreck the moment we've made sure of the doubloons."

"And what will become of all the black flour

that is lying about, sir?" asked the boatswain with a grin.

"It may take care of itself. My agreement will be up as soon as the doubloons are found, If the Don will come down handsomely with his share of what will be left, I may be brought to put the kegs we have in the brig ashore for him somewhere in Mexico; but my wish is to get out of the neighbourhood of that —— sloop-of-war, as soon as possible."

"She makes but slow headway ag'in the current, sir; but a body would think she might send in her ' oats."

"The boats might be glad to get back again," muttered Spike. "Ay, here is the door unlocked, and we can now fish for the money."

Some object had rolled against the state-room door when the vessel was capsized, and there was a good deal of difficulty in forcing it open. They succeeded at last, and Spike led the way by wading into the small apartment. Here they began to feel about beneath the water, and by a very insufficient light, in quest of the hidden treasure. Spike and his boatswain differed as to the place which had just

been described to them, as men will differ even in the account of events that pass directly before their eyes. While thus employed, the report of a heavy gun came through the doors of the cabin, penetrating to the recess in which they were thus employed.

"Ay, that's the beginning of it!" exclaimed Spike. "I wonder that the fool has put it off so long."

"That gun was a heavy fellow, Captain Spike," returned the boatswain; "and it sounded in my ears as if't was shotted."

"Ay, ay, I dare say you're right enough in both opinions. They put such guns on board their sloops-of-war, now-a-days, as a fellow used to find in the lower batteries of a two-decker only in old times; and as for shot, why Uncle Sam pays, and they think it cheaper to fire one out of a gun, than to take the trouble of drawing it."

"I believe here's one of the bags, Captain Spike," said the boatswain, making a dip, and coming up with one-half of the desired treasure in his fist. "By George, I've grabbed him, sir; and the other bag can't be far off."

"Hand that over to me," said the captain a little authoritatively, "and take a dive for the next."

As the boatswain was obeying this order, a second gun was heard, and Spike thought that the noise made by the near passage of a large shot was audible also. He called out to Ben to "bear a hand, as the ship seems in 'arnest." But the head of the boatswain being under water at the time, the admonition was thrown away. The fellow soon came up, however, puffing like a porpoise that has risen to the surface to blow.

"Hand it over to me at once," said Spike, stretching out his unoccupied hand to receive the prize; "we have little time to lose."

"That 's sooner said than done, sir," answered the boatswain; "a box has driven down upon the bag, and there 's a tight jam. I got hold of the neck of the bag, and pulled like a horse, but it would n't come no how."

"Show me the place, and let me have a drag at it. There goes another of his —— guns."

Down went Spike, and the length of time

he was under water, proved how much he was in earnest. Up he came at length, and with no better luck than his companion. He had got hold of the bag, satisfied himself by feeling its outside that it contained the doubloons, and hauled with all his strength, but it would not come. The boatswain now proposed to take a jamming hitch with a rope around the neck of the bag, which was long enough to admit of such a fastening, and then to apply their united force. Spike assented, and the boatswain rummaged about for a piece of small rope to suit his purpose. At this moment Mulford appeared at the companion-way to announce the movements on the part of the sloop-of-war. He had been purposely tardy, in order to give the ship as much time as possible; but he saw by the looks of the men that a longer delay might excite suspicion.

"Below there," called out the mate.

"What's wanting, sir?—what's wanting, sir?" answered Spike; "let's know at once."

"Have you heard the guns, Captain Spike?"

"Ay, ay, every grumbler of them. They've done no mischief, I trust, Mr. Mulford?"

"None as yet, sir; though the last shot, and it was a heavy fellow, passed just above the schooner's deck. I've the topsail sheeted home and hoisted, and it's that which has set them at work. If I clewed up again, I daresay they'd not fire another gun."

"Clew up nothing, sir, but see all clear for casting off and making sail through the South Pass. What do you say, Ben, are you ready for a drag?"

"All ready, sir," answered the boatswain, once more coming up to breathe. "Now for it, sir; a steady pull, and a pull altogether."

They *did* pull, but the hitch slipped, and both went down beneath the water. In a moment they were up again, puffing a little, and swearing a great deal. Just then another gun, and a clatter above their heads, brought them to a stand.

"What means that, Mr. Mulford?" demanded Spike, a good deal startled.

"It means that the sloop-of-war has shot away the head of this schooner's foremast, sir, and that the shot has chipped a small piece out of the heel of our maintop-mast—that's all."

Though excessively provoked at the mate's cool manner of replying, Spike saw that he might lose all by being too tenacious about securing the remainder of the doubloons. Pronouncing in very energetic terms on Uncle Sam, and all his cruisers, an anathema that we do not care to repeat, he gave a surly order to Ben to "knock-off," and abandoned his late design. In a minute he was on the deck and dressed.

"Cast-off, lads," cried the captain, as soon as on the deck of his own brig again, "and four of you man that boat. We have got half of your treasure, Señor Wan, but have been driven from the rest of it, as you see. There is the bag; when at leisure we'll divide it, and give the people their share. Mr. Mulford, keep the brig in motion, hauling up toward the South Pass, while I go ashore for the ladies. I'll meet you just in the throat of the passage."

This said, Spike tumbled into his boat, and was pulled ashore. As for Mulford, though he cast many an anxious glance toward the islet, he obeyed his orders, keeping his brig standing

off and on, under easy canvass, but working her up toward the indicated passage.

Spike was met by Jack Tier on the beach of the little island.

"Muster the women at once," ordered the captain, "we have no time to lose, for that fellow will soon be firing broadsides, and his shot now range half a mile beyond us."

"You'll no more move the widow and her maid, than you'll move the island," answered Jack laconically.

"Why should I not move then? Do they wish to stay here and starve?"

"It's little that they think of *that.* The sloop-of-war no sooner began to fire, than down went Mrs. Budd on the canvas floor of the tent, and set up just such a screaming as you may remember she tried her hand at the night the revenue craft fired into us. Biddy lay down alongside of her mistress, and at every gun, they just scream as loud as they can, as if they fancied they might frighten off Uncle Sam's men from their duty."

"Duty!—You little scamp, do you call tormenting honest traders in this fashion the duty of any man?"

"Well, captain, I'm no ways partic'lar about a word or two. Their 'ways,' if you like that better than duty, sir."

"Where's Rose? Is she down too, screaming and squalling?"

"No, Captain Spike, no. Miss Rose is endeavouring, like a handsome young Christian lady as she is, to pacify and mollify her aunt and Biddy; and right down sensible talk does she give them."

"Then she at least can go aboard the brig," exclaimed Spike, with a sudden animation, and an expression of countenance that Jack did not at all like.

"I *ray—y—ther* think she'll wish to hold on to the old lady," observed the steward's mate, a little emphatically.

"You be d—d," cried Spike fiercely; "when your opinion is wanted, I'll ask for it. If I find you've been setting that young woman's mind ag'in me, I'll toss you overboard, as I would the offals of a shark."

"Young women's minds, when they are only nineteen, get set ag'in boys of fifty-six without much assistance."

"Fifty-six yourself."

"I am fifty-three—that I'll own without making faces at it," returned Jack, meekly; "and, Stephen Spike, you logged fifty-six your last birth-day, or a false entry was made."

This conversation did not take place in the presence of the boat's crew, but as the two walked together toward the tent. They were now in the verandah, as we have called the shaded opening in front, and actually within sound of the sweet voice of Rose, as she exhorted her aunt, in tones a little louder than usual for her to use, to manifest more fortitude. Under such circumstances Spike did not deem it expedient to utter that which was uppermost in his mind, but, turning short upon Tier, he directed a tremendous blow directly between his eyes. Jack saw the danger and dodged, falling backward to avoid a concussion which he knew would otherwise be fearful, coming as it would from one of the best forecastle boxers of his time. The full force of the blow *was* avoided, though Jack got enough of it to knock him down, and to give him a pair of black eyes. Spike did not stop to pick the assistant steward

up, for another gun was fired at that very instant, and Mrs. Budd and Biddy renewed their screams. Instead of pausing to kick the prostrate Tier, as had just before been his intention, the captain entered the tent.

A scene that was sufficiently absurd met the view of Spike, when he found himself in the presence of the females. The widow had thrown herself on the ground, and was grasping the cloth of the sail on which the tent had been erected, with both her hands, and was screaming at the top of her voice. Biddy's imitation was not exactly literal, for she had taken a seat at the side of her mistress, but in the way of cries, she rather outdid her principal.

"We must be off," cried Spike, somewhat unceremoniously. "The man-of-war is blazing away as if she was firing minute-guns over her destruction, and I can wait no longer."

"I 'll not stir," answered the widow—"I can't stir—I shall be shot if I go out. No, no, no—I 'll not stir an inch."

"We 'll be kilt!—we 'll be kilt!" echoed Biddy, "and a wicket murther 't will be in that same man, war or no war."

The captain perceived the uselessness of remonstrance at such a moment, and perhaps he was secretly rejoiced thereat; but it is certain that he whipped Rose up under his arm, and walked away with her, as if she had been a child of two or three years of age. Rose did not scream, but she struggled and protested vehemently. It was in vain. Already the captain had carried her half the distance between the tent and the boat, in the last of which, a minute more would have deposited his victim, when a severe blow on the back of his head caused Spike to stumble, and he permitted Rose to escape from his grasp, in the effort to save himself from a fall. Turning fiercely toward his assailant, whom he suspected to be one of his boat's crew, he saw Tier standing within a few yards, levelling a pistol at him.

"Advance a step, and you're a dead man, villain!" screamed Jack, his voice almost cracked with rage, and the effort he made to menace.

Spike muttered an oath too revolting for our pages; but it was such a curse as none but an

old salt could give vent to, and that in the bitterness of his fiercest wrath. At that critical moment, while Rose was swelling with indignation and wounded maiden pride, almost within reach of his arms, looking more lovely than ever, as the flush of anger deepened the colour in her cheeks, a fresh and deep report from one of the guns of the sloop-of-war drew all eyes in her direction. The belching of that gun seemed to be of double the power of those which had preceded it; and jets of water that were twenty feet in height, marked the course of the formidable missile that was projected from the piece. The ship had indeed discharged one of those monster-cannons that bear the name of a distinguished French engineer, but which should more properly be called by the name of the ingenious officer who is at the head of our own ordnance, as they came originally from his inventive faculties, though somewhat improved by their European adopter. Spike suspected the truth,—for he had heard of these "Pazans," as he called them,—and he watched the booming, leaping progress of the eight-inch shell that this gun threw with the

apprehension that unknown danger is apt to excite. As jet succeeded jet, each rising nearer and nearer to his brig, the interval of time between them seeming fearfully to diminish, he muttered oath upon oath. The last leap that the shell made on the water was at about a quarter of a mile's distance of the islet on which his people had deposited at least a hundred and fifty barrels of his spurious flour; thence it flew, as it might be without an effort, with a grand and stately bound into the very centre the barrels, exploding at the moment it struck. All saw the scattering of flour, which was instantly succeeded by the heavy, though slightly straggling explosion of all the powder on the island. A hundred kegs were lighted, as it might be, in a common flash, and a cloud of white smoke poured out and concealed the whole islet, and all near it.

Rose stood confounded, nor was Jack Tier in a much better state of mind, though he still kept the pistol levelled, and menaced Spike. But the last was no longer dangerous to any there. He recollected that piles of the barrels encumbered the decks of his vessel, and he

rushed to the boat, nearly frantic with haste, ordering the men to pull for their lives. In less than five minutes he was alongside, and on the deck of the Swash—his first order being to—"Tumble every barrel of this powder into the sea, men. Over with it, Mr. Mulford; clear away the midship ports, and launch as much as you can through them."

Remonstrance on the part of Señor Montefalderon would have been useless had he been disposed to make it; but, sooth to say, he was as ready to get rid of the powder as any there, after the specimen he had just witnessed of the power of a Paixhan gun.

Thus it is ever with men. Had two or three of those shells been first thrown without effect, as might very well have happened under the circumstances, none there would have cared for the risk they were running; but the chance explosion which had occurred presented so vivid a picture of the danger, dormant and remote as it really was, as to throw the entire crew of the Swash into a frenzy of exertion.

Nor was the vessel at all free from danger. On the contrary, she ran very serious risk of

being destroyed, and in some degree, in the very manner apprehended. Perceiving that Spike was luffing up through one of the passages nearest the reef, which would carry him clear of the group, a long distance to windward of the point where he could only effect the same object, the commander of the sloop-of-war opened his fire in good earnest, hoping to shoot away something material on board the Swash before she could get beyond the reach of his shot. The courses steered by the two vessels just at that moment favoured such an attempt, though they made it necessarily very short-lived. While the Swash was near the wind, the sloop-of-war was obliged to run off to avoid islets ahead of her, a circumstance which, while it brought the brig square with the ship's broadside, compelled the latter to steer on a diverging line to the course of her chase. It was in consequence of these facts that the sloop-of-war now opened in earnest, and was soon canopied in the smoke of her own fire.

Great and important changes, as has been already mentioned, have been made in the armaments of all the smaller cruisers within

the last few years. Half a generation since, a ship of the rate—we do not say of the *size*—of the vessel which was in chase of Spike and his craft, would not have had it in her power to molest an enemy at the distance these two vessels were now apart. But recent improvements have made ships of this nominal force formidable at nearly a league's distance; more especially by means of their Paixhans and their shells.

For some little time the range carried the shot directly over the islet of the tent, Jack Tier and Rose, both of whom were watching all that passed with intense interest, standing in the open air the whole time, seemingly with no concern for themselves, so absorbed was each, notwithstanding all that had passed, in the safety of the brig. As for Rose, she thought only of Harry Mulford, and of the danger he was in by those fearful explosions of the shells. Her quick intellect comprehended the peculiar nature of the risk that was incurred by having the flour-barrels on deck, and she could not but see the manner in which Spike and his men were tumbling them into

the water, as the quickest manner of getting rid of them. After what had just passed between Jack Tier and his commander, it might not be so easy to account for his manifest, nay, intense interest in the escape of the Swash. This was apparent by his troubled countenance, by his exclamations, and occasionally by his openly-expressed wishes for her safety. Perhaps it was no more than the interest the seamen is so apt to feel in the craft in which he has long sailed, and which to him has been a home, and of which Mulford exhibited so much, in his struggles between feeling and conscience—between a true and a false duty.

As for Spike and his people, we have already mentioned their efforts to get rid of the powder. Shell after shell exploded, though none very near the brig, the ship working her guns as if in action. At length the officers of the sloop-of-war detected a source of error in their aim, that is of very common occurrence in sea-gunnery. Their shot had been thrown to *ricochet*, quartering a low, but very regular succession of little waves. Each shot striking

the water at an acute angle to its agitated surface, was deflected from a straight line, and described a regular curve toward the end of its career; or, it might be truer to say, an *irregular* curvature, for the deflection increased as the momentum of the missile diminished.

No sooner did the commanding officer of the sloop-of-war discover this fact,—and it was easy to trace the course of the shots by the jets of water they cast into the air, and to see as well as to hear the explosions of the shells, than he ordered the guns to be pointed more to windward, as a means of counteracting the departure from the straight lines. This expedient succeeded in part, the solid shot falling much nearer to the brig the moment the practice was resorted to. No shell was fired for some little time after the new order was issued, and Spike and his people began to hope these terrific missiles had ceased their annoyance. The men cheered, finding their voices for the first time since the danger had seemed so imminent, and Spike was heard animating them to their duty. As for Mulford, he was on the coach-house deck, working the brig, the

captain having confided to him that delicate duty, the highest proof he could furnish of confidence in his seamanship. The handsome young mate had just made a half-board, in the neatest manner, shoving the brig by its means through a most difficult part of the passage, and had got her handsomely filled again on the same tack, looking right out into open water, by a channel through which she could now stand on a very easy bowline. Everything seemed propitious, and the sloop-of-war's solid shot began to drop into the water a hundred yards short of the brig. In this state of things one of the Paixhans belched forth its angry flame and sullen roar again. There was no mistaking the gun. Then came its mass of iron,—a globe that would have weighed just sixty-eight pounds, had not sufficient metal been left out of its interior to leave a cavity to contain a single pound of powder. Its course, as usual, was to be marked by its path along the sea, as it bounded half a mile at a time from wave to wave. Spike saw by its undeviating course that this shell was booming terrifically toward his brig, and a cry to "look out

for the shell!" caused the work to be suspended. That shell struck the water for the last time within two hundred yards of the brig, rose dark and menacing in its furious leap; but exploded at the next instant. The fragments of the iron were scattered on each side and ahead. Of the last three or four fell into the water so near the vessel as to cast their spray on her decks.

"Overboard with the rest of the powder!" shouted Spike. "Keep the brig off a little, Mr. Mulford—keep her off, sir; you luff too much, sir."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the mate. "Keep her off it is."

"There comes the other shell!" cried Ben; but the men did not quit their toil to gaze this time. Each seaman worked as if life and death depended on his single exertions. Spike alone watched the course of the missile. On it came, booming and hurtling through the air, tossing high the jets at each leap it made from the surface, striking the water for its last bound, seemingly in a line with the shell that had just preceded it. From that spot it made its final

leap. Every hand in the brig was stayed, and every eye was raised as the rushing tempest was heard advancing. The mass went muttering directly between the masts of the Swash. It had scarcely seemed to go by when the fierce flash of fire and the sharp explosion followed. Happily for those in the brig the projectile force given by the gun carried the fragments from them, as in the other instance it had brought them forward; else would few have escaped mutilation, or death, among their crew.

The flashing of fire so near the barrels of powder that still remained on board their deck, caused the frantic efforts to be renewed, and barrel after barrel was tumbled overboard, amid the shouts that were now raised to animate the people to their duty.

"Luff, Mr. Mulford—luff you may, sir," cried Spike.

No answer was given.

"D' ye hear, there, Mr. Mulford?—it is luff you may, sir."

"Mr. Mulford is not aft, sir," called out the man at the helm: "but luff it is, sir."

"Mr. Mulford not aft! Where's the mate, man? Tell him he is wanted."

No Mulford was to be found. A call passed round the deck, was sent below, and echoed through the entire brig? but no sign or tidings could be had of the handsome mate. At that exciting moment the sloop-of-war seemed to cease her firing, and appeared to be securing her guns.

CHAPTER VII.

Thou art the same, eternal sea!
The earth hath many shapes and forms,
Of hill and valley, flower and tree;
Fields that the fervid noontide warms,
Or winter's rugged grasp deforms,
Or bright with autumn's golden store;
Thou coverest up thy face with storms,
Or smilest serene.—but still thy roar
And dashing foam go up to vex the sea-beat shore.

LUNT.

We shall now advance the time eight-and-forty hours. The baffling winds and calms that succeeded the tornado had gone, and the trades blew in their stead. Both vessels had disappeared, the brig leading, doubling the western extremity of the reef, and going off before both wind and current, with flowing sheets, fully three hours before the sloop-of-war could beat up against the latter, to a point that enabled her to do the same thing. By that time the Swash was five-and-twenty miles to the eastward, and consequently but just discernible in her loftiest sails from the ship's royal yards. Still the latter continued the chase; and that

evening, both vessels were beating down along the southern margin of the Florida Reef, against the trades, but favoured by a three or four knot current, the brig out of sight to windward. Our narrative leaves us to lose sight of both these vessels for a time, in order to return to the Islets of the Gulf. Eight-and-forty hours had made some changes in and around the haven of the Dry Tortugas. The tent still stood, and a small fire that was boiling its pot and its kettle, at no great distance from it, proved that the tent was still inhabited. The schooner also rode at her anchors, very much as she had been abandoned by Spike. The bag of doubloons, however, had been found, and there it lay, tied, but totally unguarded, in the canvas verandah of Rose Budd's habitation. Jack Tier passed and repassed it with apparent indifference, as he went to and fro, between his pantry and kitchen, busy as a bee in preparing his noontide meal for the day. This man seemed to have the islet all to himself, however, no one else being visible on any part of it. He sang his song in a cracked *contre alto* voice, and appeared to be happy in his solitude.

Occasionally he talked to himself, aloud most probably, because he had no one else to speak to. We shall record one of his recitatives, which came in between the strains of a very inharmonious air, the words of which treated of the seas, while the steward's assistant was stirring an exceedingly savoury mess that he had concocted of the ingredients to be found in the united larders of the Swash and the Mexican schooner.

"Stephen Spike is a capital willian!" exclaimed Jack, smelling at a ladle filled with his soup—"a capital willian, I call him. To think at his time of life, of such a handsome and pleasant young thing as this Rose Budd; and then to try to get her by underhand means, and by making a fool of her silly old aunt. It's wonderful what fools some old aunts be! Quite wonderful! If I was as great a simpleton as this Mrs. Budd, I'd never cross my threshold. Yes, Stephen Spike is a prodigious willian, as his best friend must own! Well, I gave him a thump on the head that he'll not forget this v'y'ge. To think of carryin' off that pretty Rose Budd in his very arms, in so indecent a

manner! Yet the man has his good p'ints, if a body could only forget his bad ones. He's a first-rate seaman. How he worked the brig till he doubled the reef, a'ter she got into open water; and how he made her walk off afore the wind, with stun'sails alow and aloft, as soon as ever he could make 'em draw! My life for it he'll tire the legs of Uncle Sam's man, afore he can fetch up with him. For running away, when hard chased, Stephen Spike has n't his equal on 'arth. But he's a great willian—a prodigious willian! I cannot say I actually wish him hanged: but I would rather have him hanged, than see him get pretty Rose in his power. What has he to do with girls of nineteen? If the rascal is one year old, he's fifty-six. I hope the sloop-of-war will find her match, and I think she will. The Molly's a great traveller, and not to be outdone easily. 'Twould be a thousand pities so lovely a craft should be cut off in the flower of her days, as it might be, and I *do* hope she'll lead that —— sloop on some sunken rock.

"Well, there's the other bag of doubloons. It seems Stephen could not get it. That's odd

too, for he's great at grabbin' gold. The man bears his age well; but he's a willian! I wonder whether he or Mulford made that half-board in the narrow channel. It was well done, and Stephen is a perfect sailor; but he says Mulford is the same. Nice young man that Mulford; just fit for Rose, and Rose for him. Pity to part them. Can find no great fault with him, except that he has too much conscience. There's such a thing as having too much as well as too little conscience. Mulford has too much, and Spike has too little. For him to think of carryin' off a girl of nineteen! I say he's fifty-six, if he's a day. How fond he used to be of this very soup. If I've seen him eat a quart of it, I've seen him eat a puncheon full of it, in my time. What an appetite the man has, when he's had a hard day's duty on't! There's a great deal to admire, and a great deal to like in Stephen Spike, but he's a reg'lar willian. I dare say he fancies himself a smart, jaunty youth, ag'in, as I can remember him; a lad of twenty, which was about his years when I first saw him, by the sign that I was very little turned of fifteen myself. Spike *was*

comely then, though I acknowledge he's a willian. I can see him now, with his deep blue roundabout, his bell-mouthed trowsers, both of fine cloth—too fine for such a willian; but fine it was, and much did it become him."

Here Jack made a long pause, during which, though he may have thought much, he said nothing. Nevertheless, he wasn't idle the while. On the contrary, he passed no less than three several times from the fire to the tent, and returned. Each time, in going and coming, he looked intently at the bag of doubloons, though he did not stop at it or touch it. Some associations connected with Spike's fruitless attempts to obtain it, must have formed its principal interest with this singular being, as he muttered his captain's name each time in passing, though he said no more audibly. The concerns of the dinner carried him back and forth; and in his last visit to the tent, he began to set a small table—one that had been brought for the convenience of Mrs. Budd and her niece, from the brig, and which of course still remained on the islet. It was while thus occupied that Jack Tier recommenced his soliloquy.

"I hope that money may do some worthy fellow good, yet. It 's Mexican gold, and that's inemy's gold, and might be condemned by law, I do suppose. Stephen had a hankering' a'ter it, but he did not get it. It come easy enough to the next man that tried. That Spike's a willian, and the gold was too good for him. He has no conscience at all, to think of a girl of nineteen! And one fit for his betters, in the bargain. The time *has* been, when Stephen Spike might have pretended to 'Rose Budd's equal. That much I'll ever maintain, but that time 's gone; and, what is more, it will never come again. I should like Mulford better, if he had a little less conscience. Conscience may do for Uncle Sam's ships, but it is sometimes in the way a-board a trading craft. What can a fellow do with a conscience when dollars is to be smuggled off, or tobacco smuggled ashore? I do suppose I 've about as much conscience as it is useful to have, and I 've got ashore in my day, twenty thousand dollars' worth of stuff, of one sort or another, if I 've got ashore the value of ten dollars. But Spike carries on business on too large a

scale, and many 's the time I 've told him so. I could have forgiven him anything but this attempt on Rose Budd, and he 's altogether too old for that; to say nothing of other people's rights. He 's an up-and-down willian, and a body can make no more, nor any less of him. That soup must be near done, and I 'll hoist the signal for grub."

This signal was a blue-peter, of which one had been brought ashore to signal the brig; and with which Jack now signaled the schooner. If the reader will turn his eyes toward the last-named vessel, he will find the guests whom Tier expected to surround his table. Rose, her aunt, and Biddy were all seated, under an awning made by a sail, on the deck of the schooner, which now floated so buoyantly as to show that she had been materially lightened since last seen. Such indeed was the fact, and he who had been the instrument of producing this change, appeared on deck, in the person of Mulford, as soon as he was told that the blue-peter of Jack Tier was flying.

The boat of the light-house, that in which Spike had landed in quest of Rose, was lying

alongside of the schooner, and sufficiently explained the manner in which the mate had left the brig. This boat, in fact, had been fastened astern, in the hurry of getting from under the sloop-of-war's fire, and Mulford had taken the opportunity of the consternation and frantic efforts produced by the explosion of the last shell thrown, to descend from his station on the coach-house into this boat, to cut the painter, and to let the Swash glide away from him. This the vessel had done with great rapidity, leaving him unseen under the cover of her stern. As soon as in the boat, the mate had seized an oar, and sculled to an islet that was within fifty yards, concealing the boat behind a low hummock that formed a tiny bay. All this was done so rapidly, that, united to the confusion on board the Swash, no one discovered the mate or the boat. Had he been seen, however, it is very little probable that Spike would have lost a moment of time in the attempt to recover either. But he was not seen, and it was the general opinion on board the Swash, for quite an hour, that her handsome mate had been knocked overboard and

killed by a fragment of the shell that had seemed to explode almost in the ears of her people. When the reef was doubled, however, and Spike made his preparations for meeting the rough water, he hove to, and ordered his own yawl, which was also towing astern, to be hauled up alongside, in order to be hoisted in. Then, indeed, some glimmerings of the truth were shed on the crew, who missed the light-house boat, though many contended that its painter must also have been cut by a fragment of the shell, and that the mate had died loyal to roguery and treason. Mulford was much liked by the crew, and he was highly valued by Spike, on account of his seamanship and integrity, this latter being a quality that is just as necessary for one of the captain's character to meet with in those he trusts as to any other man. But Spike thought differently of the cause of Mulford's disappearance, from his crew. He ascribed it altogether to love for Rose, when, in truth, it ought in justice to have been quite as much imputed to a determination to sail no longer with a man who was clearly guilty of treason. Of smuggling, Mul-

ford had long suspected Spike, though he had no direct proof of the fact; but now he could not doubt that he was not only engaged in supplying the enemy with the munitions of war, but was actively bargaining to sell his brig for a hostile cruiser, and possibly to transfer himself and crew along with her.

It is scarcely necessary to speak of the welcome Mulford received when he reached the islet of the tent. He and Rose had a long private conference, the result of which was to let the handsome mate into the secret of his pretty companion's true feelings toward himself. She had received him with tears, and a betrayal of emotion that gave him every encouragement, and now she did not deny her preference. In that interview the young people plighted to each other their troth. Rose never doubted of obtaining her aunt's consent in due time, all her prejudices being in favour of the sea and sailors; and should she not, she would soon be her own mistress, and at liberty to dispose of herself and her pretty little fortune, as she might choose. But a cypher as she was, in all questions of real moment, Mrs.

Budd was not a person likely to throw any real obstacle in the way of the young people's wishes; the true grounds of whose present apprehensions were all to be referred to Spike, his intentions, and his well known perseverance. Mulford was convinced that the brig would be back in quest of the remaining doubloons, as soon as she could get clear of the sloop-of-war, though he was not altogether without a hope that the latter, when she found it impossible to overhaul her chase, might also return in order to ascertain what discoveries could be made in and about the schooner. The explosion of the powder on the islet, must have put the man-of-war's men in possession of the secret of the real quality of the flour that had composed her cargo, and it doubtless had awakened all their distrust on the subject of the Swash's real business in the Gulf. Under all the circumstances, therefore, it did appear quite as probable that one of the parties should re-appear at the scene of their recent interview, as the other.

Bearing all these things in mind, Mulford had lost no time in completing his own arrange-

ments. He felt that he had some atonement to make to the country, for the part he had seemingly taken in the late events; and it occurred to him, could he put the schooner in a state to be moved, then place her in the hands of the authorities, his own peace would be made, and his character cleared. Rose no sooner understood his plans and motives, than she entered into them with all the ardour and self-devotion of her sex; for the single hour of confidential and frank communication which had just passed, doubled the interest she felt in Mulford and in all that belonged to him. Jack Tier was useful on board a vessel, though his want of stature and force rendered him less so than was common with sea-faring men. His proper sphere certainly had been the cabins, where his usefulness was beyond all cavil; but he was now very serviceable to Mulford on the deck of the schooner. The first two days Mrs. Budd had been left on the islet, to look to the concerns of the kitchen, while Mulford, accompanied by Rose, Biddy, and Jack Tier, had gone off to the schooner, and set her pumps in motion again. It was little that Rose could do,

or indeed attempt to do, at this toil; but the pumps being small and easily worked, Biddy and Jack were of great service. By the end of the second day, the pumps sucked; the cargo that remained in the schooner, as well as the form of her bottom, contributing greatly to lessen the quantity of the water that was to be got out of her.

Then it was that the doubloons fell into Mulford's hands, along with everything else that remained below decks. It was perhaps fortunate that the vessel was thoroughly purified by her immersion, and the articles that were brought on deck to be dried, were found in a condition to give no great offence to those who removed them. By leaving the hatches off, and the cabin-doors open, the warm winds of the trades effectually dried the interior of the schooner, in the course of a single night; and when Mulford repaired on board of her, on the morning of the third day, he found her in a condition to be fitted for his purposes. On this occasion Mrs. Budd had expressed a wish to go off to look at her future accommodations, and Jack was left on the islet to cook

the dinner, which will explain the actual state of things, as described in the opening of this chapter.

As those who toil usually have a relish for their food, the appearance of the blue-peter was far from being unwelcome to those on board of the schooner. They got into the boat, and were sculled ashore by Mulford, who, seaman-like, used only one hand in performing this service. In a very few minutes they were all seated at the little table, which was brought out into the tent-verandah for the enjoyment of the breeze.

"So far, well," said Mulford, after his appetite was mainly appeased, Rose picking crumbs, and affecting to eat merely to have the air of keeping him company, one of the minor proofs of the little attentions that spring from the affections. "So far, well. The sails are bent, and though they might be newer and better, they can be made to answer. It was fortunate to find anything like a second suit on board a Mexican craft of that size, at all. As it is, we have foresail, mainsail, and jib; and with that canvas, I think we might venture to beat the

schooner to Key West, in the course of a day and a night. If I dared to venture outside of the reef, it might be done sooner even, for they tell me there is a four-knot current, sometimes, in that track; but I do not like to venture outside so short-handed. The current inside must serve our turn, and we shall get smooth water by keeping under the lee of the rocks. I only hope we shall not get into an eddy, as we go further from the end of the reef, and into the bight of the coast."

"Is there danger of that?" demanded Rose, whose quick intellect had taught her many of these things, since her acquaintance with vessels.

"There may be, looking at the formation of the reef and islands; though I know nothing of the fact by actual observation. This is my first visit in this quarter."

"Eddies are serious matters," put in Mrs. Budd; "and my poor husband could not abide them. Tides are good things, but eddies are very disagreeable."

"Well, aunty, I should think eddies might sometimes be as welcome as tides. It must

depend very much on the way one wishes to go."

"Rose, you surprise me! All that you have read, and all that you have heard, must have shown you the difference. Do they not say 'a man is floating with the tide,' when things are prosperous with him—and don't ships drop down with the tide, and beat the wind with the tide? And don't vessels sometimes 'tide it up to town,' as it is called; and is n't it thought an advantage to have the tide with you?"

"All very true, aunty, but I do not see how that makes eddies any the worse."

"Because eddies are the opposites of tides, child. When the tide goes one way, the eddy goes another—is n't it so, Harry Mulford? You never heard of one's floating in an eddy."

"That's what we mean by an eddy, Mrs. Budd," answered the handsome mate, delighted to hear Rose's aunt call him by an appellation so kind and familiar,—a thing she had never done previously to the intercourse which had been the consequence of their present situation. "Though I agree with Rose in thinking an eddy may be a good, or a bad thing, and

very much like a tide, as one wishes to steer."

"You amaze me, both of you! Tides are always spoken of favourably, but eddies never. If a ship gets ashore, the tide can float her off; *that* I've heard a thousand times. Then, what do the newspapers say of President ——, and Governor ——, and Congressman ——*? Why, that they all 'float in the tide of public opinion,' and that must mean something particularly good, as they are always in office. No, no, Harry; I'll acknowledge that you do know something about ships; a good deal, considering how young you are; but you have something to learn about eddies. Never trust one as long as you live."

Mulford was silent; and Rose took the occasion to change the discourse.

"I hope we shall soon be able to quit this place," she said; "for I confess to some dread of Captain Spike's return."

"Captain Stephen Spike has greatly disappointed me," observed the aunt, gravely. "I

*We suppress the names used by Mrs. Budd, out of delicacy to the individuals mentioned, who are still living.

do not know that I was ever before deceived in judging a person. I could have sworn he was an honest, frank, well-meaning sailor—a character, of all others, that I love; but it has turned out otherwise."

"He's a willian!" muttered Jack Tier.

Mulford smiled; at which speech we must leave to conjecture; but he answered Rose, as he ever did, promptly and with pleasure.

"The schooner is ready, and this must be our last meal ashore," he said. "Our outfit will be no great matter; but if it will carry us down to Key West, I shall ask no more of it. As for the return of the Swash, I look upon it as certain. She could easily get clear of the sloop-of-war, with the start she had; and Spike is a man that never yet abandoned a doubloon, when he knew where one was to be found."

"Stephen Spike is like all his fellow-creatures," put in Jack Tier, pointedly. "He has his faults, and he has his virtues."

"Virtue is a term I should never think of applying to such a man," returned Mulford, a little surprised at the fellow's earnestness. "The word is a big one, and belongs to quite

another class of persons." Jack muttered a few syllables that were unintelligible, when again the conversation changed.

Rose now inquired of Mulford as to their prospects of getting to Key West. He told her that the distance was about sixty miles; their route lying along the north or inner side of the Florida Reef. The whole distance was to be made against the trade wind, which was then blowing about an eight-knot breeze, though, bating eddies, they might expect to be favoured with the current, which was less strong inside, than outside of the reef. As for handling the schooner, Mulford saw no great difficulty in that. She was not large, and was both lightly sparred and lightly rigged. All her top-hamper had been taken down by Spike, and nothing remained but the plainest and most readily-managed gear. A fore-and-aft vessel, sailing close by the wind, is not difficult to steer; will almost steer herself, indeed, in smooth water. Jack Tier could take his trick at the helm, in any weather, even in running before the wind, the time when it is most difficult to guide a craft; and Rose might be

made to understand the use of the tiller, and taught to govern the motions of a vessel so small and so simply rigged, when on a wind and in smooth water. On the score of managing the schooner, therefore, Mulford thought there would be little cause for apprehension. Should the weather continue settled, he had little doubt of safely landing the whole party at Key West, in the course of the next four-and-twenty hours. Short sail he should be obliged to carry, as well on account of the greater facility of managing it, as on account of the circumstance that the schooner was now in light ballast trim, and would not bear much canvas. He thought that the sooner they left the islets the better, as it could not be long ere the brig would be seen hovering around the spot. All these matters were discussed as the party still sat at table; and when they left it, which was a few minutes later, it was to remove the effects they intended to carry away to the boat. This was soon done, both Jack Tier and Biddy proving very serviceable, while Rose tripped backward and forward, with a step elastic as a gazelle's, carrying light burdens.

In half an hour the boat was ready. "Here lies the bag of doubloons, still," said Mulford, smiling. "Is it to be left, or shall we give it up to the admiralty court at Key West, and put in a claim for salvage?"

"Better leave it for Spike," said Jack unexpectedly. "Should he come back, and find the doubloons, he may be satisfied, and not look for the schooner. On the other hand, when the vessel is missing, he will think that the money is in her. Better leave it for old Stephen."

"I do not agree with you, Tier," said Rose. though she looked as amicably at the steward's assistant, as she thus opposed his opinion, as if anxious to persuade rather than to coerce. "I do not quite agree with you. This money belongs to the Spanish merchant; and, as we take away with us his vessel, to give it up to the authorities at Key West, I do not think we have a right to put his gold on the shore and abandon it."

This disposed of the question. Mulford took the bag and carried it to the boat, without waiting to ascertain if Jack had any objection;

while the whole party followed. In a few minutes every body and every thing in the boat was transferred to the deck of the schooner. As for the tent, the old sails of which it was made, the furniture it contained, and such articles of provisions as were not wanted, they were left on the islet without regret. The schooner had several casks of fresh water, which were found in her hold, and she had also a cask or two of salted meats, besides several articles of food more delicate, that had been provided by Señor Montefalderon for his own use, and which had not been damaged by the water. A keg of Boston crackers were among these eatables, quite half of which were still in a state to be eaten. They were Biddy's delight; and it was seldom that she could be seen when not nibbling at one of them. The bread of the crew was hopelessly damaged. But Jack had made an ample provision of bread when sent ashore, and there was still a hundred barrels of flour in the schooner's hold. One of these had been hoisted on deck by Mulford and opened. The injured flour was easily removed, leaving a considerable quantity

fit for the uses of the kitchen. As for the keg of gunpowder, it was incontinently committed to the deep.

Thus provided for, Mulford decided that the time had arrived when he ought to quit his anchorage. He had been employed most of that morning in getting the schooner's anchor, a work of great toil to him, though everybody had assisted. He had succeeded, and the vessel now rode by a kedge that he could easily weigh by means of a deck tackle. It remained now, therefore, to lift this kedge and to stand out of the bay of the islets. No sooner was the boat secured astern, and its freight disposed of, than the mate began to make sail. In order to hoist the mainsail well up he was obliged to carry the halyards to the windlass. Thus aided, he succeeded without much difficulty. He and Jack Tier and Biddy got the jib hoisted by hand; and as for the foresail, that would almost set itself. Of course it was not touched until the kedge was aweigh. Mulford found little difficulty in lifting the last, and he soon had the satisfaction of finding his craft clear of the ground. As Jack Tier was every way compe-

tent to taking charge of the forecastle, Mulford now sprang aft, and took his own station at the helm; Rose acting as his pretty assistant on the quarter-deck.

There is little mystery in getting a fore-and-aft vessel under way. Her sails fill almost as a matter of course, and motion follows as a necessary law. Thus did it prove with the Mexican schooner, which turned out to be a fast-sailing and an easily-worked craft. She was, indeed, an American bottom, as it is termed, having been originally built for the Chesapeake; and though not absolutely what is understood by a Baltimore clipper, so nearly of that mould and nature as to possess some of the more essential qualities. As usually happens, however, when a foreigner gets hold of an American schooner, the Mexicans had shortened her masts and lessened her canvas. This circumstance was rather an advantage to Mulford, who would probably have had more to attend to than he wished, under the original rig of the craft.

Everybody, even to the fastidious Mrs. Budd, was delighted with the easy and swift movement

of the schooner. Mulford, now he had got her under canvas, handled her without any difficulty, letting her stand toward the channel through which he intended to pass, with her sheets just taken in, though compelled to keep a little off, in order to enter between the islets. No difficulty occurred, however, and in less than ten minutes the vessel was clear of the channels and in open water. The sheets were now flattened in, and the schooner brought close by the wind. A trial of the vessel on this mode of sailing was no sooner made than Mulford was induced to regret he had taken so many precautions against any increasing power of the wind. To meet emergencies, and under the notion he should have his craft more under command, the young man had reefed his mainsail, and taken the bonnets off the foresail and jib. As the schooner stood up better than he had anticipated, the mate felt as all seamen are so apt to feel when they see that their vessels might be made to perform more than is actually got out of them. As the breeze was fresh, however, he determined not to let out the reef; and the labour of lacing on the bonnets again

was too great to be thought of just at that moment.

We all find relief on getting in motion when pressed by circumstances. Mulford had been in great apprehension of the re-appearance of the Swash all that day; for it was about the time when Spike would be apt to return, in the event of his escaping from the sloop-of-war, and he dreaded Rose's again falling into the hands of a man so desperate. Nor is it imputing more than a very natural care to the young man, to say that he had some misgivings concerning himself. Spike, by this time, must be convinced that his business in the Gulf was known; and one who had openly thrown off his service, as his mate had done, would unquestionably be regarded as a traitor to *his* interests, whatever might be the relation in which he would stand to the laws of the country. It was probable such an alleged offender would not be allowed to appear before the tribunals of the land, to justify himself and to accuse the truly guilty, if it were in the power of the last to prevent it. Great, therefore, was the satisfaction of our ha[illegible]

young mate when he found himself again fairly in motion, with a craft under him that glided ahead in a way to prove that she might give even the Swash some trouble to catch her in the event of a trial of speed.

Everybody entered into the feelings of Mulford, as the schooner passed gallantly out from between the islets, and entered the open water. Fathom by fathom did her wake rapidly increase, until it could no longer be traced back as far as the sandy beaches that had just been left. In a quarter of an hour more the vessel had drawn so far from the land that some of the smaller and lowest of the islets were getting to be indistinct. At that instant everybody had come aft, the females taking their seats on the trunks which, in this vessel as in the Swash herself, gave space and height to the cabin.

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Budd, who found the freshness of the sea air invigorating, as well as their speed exciting, "This is what I call maritime, Rosy dear. This is what is meant by the Maritime States, about which we read so much, and which are commonly thought to be so important. We are now in a Maritime

State, and I feel perfectly happy after all our dangers and adventures!"

"Yes, aunty, and I am delighted that you *are* happy," answered Rose, with frank affection. "We are now rid of that infamous Spike, and may hope never to see his face more."

"Stephen Spike has his good p'ints as well as another," said Jack Tier, abruptly.

"I know that he is an old shipmate of yours, Tier, and that you cannot forget how he once stood connected with you, and am sorry I have said so much against him," answered Rose, expressing her concern even more by her looks and tones, than by her words.

Jack was mollified by this, and he let his feeling be seen, though he said no more than to mutter "He's a willian!" words that had frequently issued from his lips within the last day or two.

"Stephen Spike is a capital seaman, and that is something in any man," observed the relict of Captain Budd. "He learned his trade from one who was every way qualified to teach him, and it's no wonder he should be expert. Do you expect, Mr. Mulford, to beat the wind the whole distance to Key West?"

It was not possible for any one to look more grave than the mate did habitually while the widow was floundering through her sea-terms. Rose had taught him that respect for her aunt was to be one of the conditions of her own regard; though Rose had never opened her lips to him on the subject.

"Yes, ma'am," answered the mate, respectfully, "we are in the trades, and shall have to turn to windward every inch of the way to Key West."

"Of what lock is this place the key, Rosy?" asked the aunt, innocently enough. "I know that forts and towns are sometimes called keys, but they always have locks of some sort or other. Now, Gibraltar is the key of the Mediterrranean, as your uncle has told me fifty times; and I have been there, and can understand why it should be,—but I do not know of what lock this West is the key.

"It is not that sort of key which is meant, aunty, at all—but quite a different thing. The key meant is an island."

"And why should any one be so silly as to call an island a key?"

"The place where vessels unload is sometimes called a key," answered Mulford;—"the French calling it a *quai*, and the Dutch *kaye*. I suppose our English word is derived from these. Now, a low, sandy island, looking somewhat like keys, or wharves, seamen have given them this name. Key West is merely a low island."

"Then there is no lock to it, or anything to be unfastened?" said the widow, in her most simple manner.

"It may turn out to be the key to the Gulf of Mexico, one of these days, ma'am. Uncle Sam is surveying the reef, and intends to do something here, I believe. When Uncle Sam is really in earnest he is capable of performing great things."

Mrs. Budd was satisfied with this explanation, though she told Biddy that evening, that "locks and keys go together, and that the person who christened the island to which they were going, must have been very weak in the upper story." But these *reflections* on the intellects of her fellow-creatures were by no means uncommon with the worthy relict

we cannot say that her remarks made any particular impression on her Irish maid.

In the meantime, the Mexican schooner behaved quite to Mulford's satisfaction. He thought her a little tender in the squalls, of which they had several that afternoon, but he remarked to Rose, who expressed her uneasiness at the manner in which the vessel lay over in one of them, that "she comes down quite easy to her bearings, but it is hard forcing her beyond them. The vessel needs more cargo to ballast her, though, on the whole, I find her as stiff as one could expect. I am now glad that I reefed, and reduced the head sails, though I was sorry at having done so when we first came out. At this rate of sailing, we ought to be up with Key West by morning."

But that rate of sailing did not continue. Toward evening, the breeze lessened almost to a calm again, the late tornado appearing to have quite deranged the ordinary stability of the trades. When the sun set, and it went down into the broad waters of the Gulf a flood of flame, there was barely a two-knot breeze,

and Mulford had no longer any anxiety on the subject of keeping his vessel on her legs. His solicitude, now, was confined to the probability of falling in with the Swash. As yet, nothing was visible, either in the shape of land, or in that of a sail. Between the islets of the Dry Tortugas and the next nearest visible keys, there is a space of open water, of some forty miles in width. The reef extends across it, of course; but nowhere does the rock protrude itself above the surface of the sea. The depth of water on this reef varies essentially. In some places, a ship of size might pass on to it, if not across it; while, in others, a man could wade for miles. There is one deep and safe channel; safe to those who are acquainted with it, through the centre of this open space, and which is sometimes used by vessels that wish to pass from one side to the other; but it is ever better for those whose business does not call them in that direction, to give the rocks a good berth, more especially in the night.

Mulford had gleaned many of the leading facts connected with the channels and the navigation of those waters, from Spi[illegible]

older seamen of the brig, during the time they had been lying at the Tortugas. Such questions and answers are common enough on board ships, and, as they are usually put and given with intelligence, one of our mate's general knowledge of his profession, was likely to carry away much useful information. By conversations of this nature, and by consulting the charts, which Spike did not affect to conceal after the name of his port became known, the young man, in fact, had so far made himself master of the subject, as to have tolerably accurate notions of the courses, distances, and general peculiarities of the reef. When the sun went down, he supposed himself to be about half way across the space of open water, and some five-and-twenty miles dead to windward of his port of departure. This was doing very well for the circumstances, and Mulford believed himself and his companions clear of Spike, when, as night drew its veil over the tranquil sea, nothing was in sight.

A very judicious arrangement was made for the watches on board the Mexican schooner, on this important night. Mrs. Budd had a

great fancy to keep a watch, for once in her life, and, after the party had supped, and the subject came up in the natural course of things, a dialogue like this occurred:

"Harry must be fatigued," said Rose, kindly, "and must want sleep. The wind is so light, and the weather appears to be so settled, that I think it would be better for him to 'turn in,' as he calls it,"—here Rose laughed so prettily, that the handsome mate wished she would repeat the words—"better that he should 'turn in' now, and we can call him, should there be need of his advice or assistance. I dare say Jack Tier and I can take very good care of the schooner until daylight."

Mrs. Budd thought it would be no more than proper for one of her experience and years to rebuke this levity, as well as to enlighten the ignorance her niece had betrayed.

"You should be cautious, my child, how you propose anything to be done on a ship's board," observed the aunt. "It req[illegible] experience and a suitable knowledge [illegible] to give maritime advice. Now, as [illegible] been expected, considering your year[illegible]

short time you have been at sea, you have made several serious mistakes in what you have proposed. In the first place, there should always be a mate on the deck, as I have heard your dear departed uncle say, again and again; and how can there be a mate on the deck, if Mr. Mulford 'turns in,' as you propose, seeing that he's the only mate we have. Then you should never laugh at any maritime expression, for each and all are, as a body might say, solemnized by storms and dangers. That Harry is fatigued, I think is very probable; and he must set our watches, as they call it, when he can make his arrangements for the night, and take his rest as is usual. Here is my watch to begin with; and I'll engage he does not find it two minutes out of the way, though yours, Rosy, dear, like most girls' time-pieces, is, I'll venture to say, dreadfully wrong. Where is your chronometer, Mr. Mulford; let us see how this excellent watch of mine, which was once my poor departed Mr. Budd's, will agree with that piece of yours, which I have heard you say is excellent."

Here was a flight in science and nautical lan-

guage that poor Mulford could not have anticipated, even in the captain's relict. That Mrs. Budd should mistake "setting the watch," for "setting our watches," was not so very violent a blunder that one ought to be much astonished at it in *her;* but that she should expect to find a chronometer that was intended to keep the time of Greenwich agreeing with a watch that was set for the time of New York, betrayed a degree of ignorance that the handsome mate was afraid Rose would resent on him, when the mistake was made to appear. As the widow held out her own watch for the comparison, however, he could not refuse to produce his own. By Mrs. Budd's watch it was past seven o'clock, while by his own, or the Greenwich-set chronometer, it was a little past twelve.

"How very wrong your watch is, Mr. Mulford," cried the good lady, "notwithstanding all you have said in its favour. It 's quite five hours too fast, I do declare; and now, Rose dear, you see the importance of setting [illegible] on a ship's board, as is done every eve[illegible] departed husband has often told me."

"Harry's must be what he calls a d[illegible]

aunty," said Rose, laughing, though she scarce knew at what.

"The watch goes too," added the widow, raising the chronometer to her ear, "though it is so very wrong. Well, set it, Mr. Mulford; then we will set Rose's, which I 'll engage is half an hour out of the way, though it can never be as wrong as yours."

Mulford was a good deal embarrassed, but he gained courage by looking at Rose, who appeared to him quite as much mystified as her aunt. For once he hoped Rose was ignorant; for nothing would be so likely to diminish the feeling produced by the exposure of the aunt's mistake as to include the niece in the same category.

"My watch is a chronometer, you will recollect, Mrs. Budd," said the young man.

"I know it; and they ought to keep the very best time—*that* I 've always heard. My poor Mr. Budd had two, and they were as large as compasses, and sold for hundreds after his lamented decease.

"They were ship's chronometers, but mine was made for the pocket. It is true, chrono-

meters are intended to keep the most accurate time, and usually they do; this of mine in particular, would not lose ten seconds in a twelvemonth, did I not carry it on my person."

"No, no, it does not seem to lose any, Harry; it only gains," cried Rose, laughing.

Mulford was now satisfied, notwithstanding all that had passed on a previous occasion, that the laughing, bright-eyed, and quick-witted girl at his elbow, knew no more of the uses of a chronometer than her unusually dull and ignorant aunt; and he felt himself relieved from all embarrassment at once. Though he dared not even seem to distrust Mrs. Budd's intellect or knowledge before Rose, he did not scruple to laugh at Rose herself, to Rose. With *her* there was no jealousy on the score of capacity, her quickness being almost as obvious to all who approached her, as her beauty.

"Rose Budd, you do not understand the uses of a chronometer, I see," said the mate, firmly, "notwithstanding all I have told you concerning them."

"It is to keep time, Harry Mulford, is it not?"

"True, to keep time—but to keep the time of a particular meridian; you know what meridian means, I hope?"

Rose looked intently at her lover, and she looked singularly lovely, for she blushed slightly, though her smile was as open and amicable as ingenuousness and affection could make it.

"A meridian means a point over our heads —the spot where the sun is at noon," said Rose doubtingly.

"Quite right; but it also means longitude, in one sense. If you draw a line from one pole to the other, all the places it crosses are on some meridian. As the sun first appears in the east, it follows that he rises sooner in places that are east than in places that are further west. Thus it is, that at Greenwich, in England, where there is an observatory made for nautical purposes, the sun rises about five hours sooner than it does here. All this difference is subject to rules, and we know exactly how to measure it."

"How can that be, Harry? You told me this but the other day, yet have I forgotten it."

"Quite easily. As the earth turns round in

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just twenty-four hours, and its circumference is divided into three hundred and sixty equal parts, called degrees, we have only to divide 360 by 24, to know how many of these degrees are included in the difference produced by one hour of time. There are just fifteen of them, as you will find by multiplying 24 by 15. It follows that the sun rises just one hour later, each fifteen degrees of longitude, as you go west, or one hour earlier each fifteen degrees of longitude, as you go east. Having ascertained the difference by the hour, it is easy enough to calculate for the minutes and seconds."

"Yes, yes," said Rose eagerly, "I see all that—go on."

"Now a chronometer is nothing but a watch made with great care, so as not to lose or gain more than a few seconds in a twelvemonth. Its whole merit is in keeping time accurately."

"Still I do not see how that can be anything more than a very good watch."

"You *will* see in a minute, Rose. For purposes that you will presently understand, books are calculated for certain meridians, or longitudes, as at Greenwich and Paris, and those

who use the books calculated for Greenwich get their chronometers set at Greenwich, and those who use the Paris, get their chronometers set to Paris time. When I was last in England, I took this watch to Greenwich, and had it set at the Observatory to the true solar time. Ever since it has been running by that time, and what you see here is the true Greenwich time, after allowing for a second or two that it may have lost or gained."

"All that is plain enough," said the much interested Rose, but of what use is it all?"

"To help mariners to find their longitude at sea, and thus know where they are. As the sun passes so far north, and so far south of the equator each year, it is easy enough to find the latitude, by observing his position at noon-day; but for a long time seamen had great difficulty in ascertaining their longitudes. That, too, is done by observing the different heavenly bodies, and with greater accuracy than by any other process; but this thought of measuring the time is very simple, and so easily put in practice, that we all run by it now."

"Still I cannot understand it," said Rose,

looking so intently, so eagerly, and so intelligently into the handsome mate's eyes, that he found it was pleasant to teach her other things besides how to love.

"I will explain it. Having the Greenwich time in the watch, we observe the sun, in order to ascertain the true time, wherever we may happen to be. It is a simple thing to ascertain the true time of day by an observation of the sun, which marks the hours in his track; and when we get our observation, we have some one to note the time at a particular instant on the chronometer. By noting the hour, minutes, and seconds, at Greenwich, at the very instant we observe here, when we have calculated from that observation the time here, we have only to add, or subtract the time here from that of Greenwich, to know precisely how far east or west we are from Greenwich, which gives us our longitude."

"I begin to comprehend it again," exclaimed Rose, delighted at the acquisition in knowledge she had just made. "How beautiful it is, yet how simple—but why do I forget it?"

"Perfectly simple, and perfectly sure, too,

when the chronometer is accurate, and the observations are nicely made. It is seldom we are more than eight or ten miles out of the way, and for them we keep a look-out. It is only to ascertain the time where you are, by means that are easily used, then look at your watch to learn the time of day at Greenwich, or any other meridian you may have selected, and to calculate your distance, east or west, from that meridian, by the difference in the two times."

Rose could have listened all night, for her quick mind readily comprehended the principle which lies at the bottom of this useful procecs, though still ignorant of some of the details. This time she was determined to secure her acquisition, though it is quite probable that, woman-like, they were once more lost, almost as easily as made. Mulford, however, was obliged to leave her to look at the vessel, before he stretched himself on the deck in an old sail; it having been previously determined that he should sleep first, while the wind was light, and that Jack Tier, assisted by the females, should keep the first watch. Rose would not detain

the mate, therefore, but let him go his way in order to see that all was right before he took his rest.

Mrs. Budd had listened to Mulford's second explanation of the common mode of ascertaining the longitude with all the attention of which she was capable, but it far exceeded the powers of her mind to comprehend it. There are persons who accustom themselves to think so superficially, that it becomes a painful process to attempt to dive into any of the *arcana* of nature, and who ever turn from such investigations wearied and disgusted. Many of these persons, perhaps most of them, need only a little patience and perseverance to comprehend all the more familiar phenomena, but they cannot command even that much of the two qualities named to obtain the knowledge they would fain wish to possess. Mrs. Budd did not belong to a division as high in the intellectual scale as even this vapid class. Her intellect was unequal to embracing anything of an abstracted character, and only received the most obvious impressions, and those quite half the time it received wrong. The mate's reason-

ing, therefore, was not only inexplicable to her, but it sounded absurd and impossible.

"Rosy, dear," said the worthy relict, as soon as she saw Mulford stretch his fine frame on his bed of canvas, speaking at the same time in a low, confidential tone to her niece, "what was it that Harry was telling you a little while ago. It sounded to me like rank nonsense; and men *will* talk nonsense to young girls, as I have so often warned you, child. You must never listen to their *nonsense*, Rosy; but remember your catechism and confirmation vow, and be a good girl."

To how many of the feeble-minded and erring do those offices of the church prove a stay and support, when their own ordinary powers of resistance would fail them. Rose, however, viewed the matter just as it was, and answered accordingly.

"But this was nothing of that nature, aunty," she said, "and only an account of the mode of finding out where a ship is, when out of sight of land, in the middle of the ocean. We had the same subject up the other day."

"And how did Harry tell you this time that it was done, my dear?"

"By finding the difference in the time of day between two places—just as he did before."

"But there *is* no difference in the time of day, child, when the clocks go well."

"Yes there is, aunty dear, as the sun rises in one place before it does in another."

"Rose, you've been listening to nonsense, now! Remember what I have so often told you about young men, and their way of talking. I admit Harry Mulford is a respectable youth, and has respectable connections, and since you like one another, you may have him with all my heart, as soon as he gets a full-jiggered ship, for I am resolved no niece of my poor dear husband's shall ever marry a mate, or a captain even, unless he has a full-jiggered ship under his feet. But do not talk nonsense with him. Nonsense is nonsense, though a sensible man talks it. As for all this stuff about the time of day, you can see it is nonsense, as the sun rises but once in twenty-four hours, and of course there cannot be two times, as you call it."

"But aunty dear, it is not always noon at London when it is noon at New York."

"Fiddle-faddle, child; noon is noon, and there are no more two noons than two suns or two times. Distrust what young men tell you, Rosy, if you would be safe, though they should tell you you are handsome."

Poor Rose sighed, and gave up the explanation in despair. Then a smile played round her pretty mouth. It was not at her aunt that she smiled; this she never permitted herself to do, weak as was that person, and weak as she saw her to be; she smiled at the recollection how often Mulford had hinted at her good looks—for Rose was a female, and had her own weaknesses as well as another. But the necessity of acting soon drove these thoughts from her mind, and Rose sought Jack Tier, to confer with him on the subject of their new duties.

As for Harry Mulford, his head was no sooner laid on its bunch of sail, than he fell into a profound sleep. There he lay, slumbering as the seaman slumbers, with no sense of surrounding things. The immense fatigues of that and of the two preceding days,—for he had toiled at the pumps even long after night had come, until the vessel was clear,—weighed him down,

and nature was now claiming her influence and taking a respite from exertion. Had he been left to himself it is probable the mate would not have arisen until the sun had reappeared some hours.

It is now necessary to explain more minutely the precise condition as well as the situation of the schooner. On quitting his port, Mulford had made a stretch of some leagues in length toward the northward and eastward, when he tacked and stood to the southward. There was enough of southing in the wind to make his last course nearly due south. As he neared the reef, he found that he fell in some miles to the eastward of the islets,—proof that he was doing very well, and that there was no current to do him any material harm, if, indeed, there was not actually a current in his favour. He next tacked to the northward again, and stood in that direction until near night, when he once more went about. The wind was now so light that he saw little prospect of getting in with the reef again until the return of day; but as he had left orders with Jack Tier to be called at at twelve o'clock, at all events, this gave him

no uneasiness. At the time when the mate lay down to take his rest, therefore, the schooner was quite five-and-twenty miles to windward of the Dry Tortugas, and some twenty miles to the northward of the Florida Reef, with the wind quite light at east-south-east. Such, then, was the position or situation of the schooner.

As respects her condition, it is easily described. She had but the three sails bent,—mainsail, foresail, and jib. Her topmasts had been struck, and all the hamper that belonged to them was below. The mainsail was single-reefed, and the foresail and jib were without their bonnets, as has already been mentioned. This was somewhat short canvas, but Mulford knew that it would render his craft more manageable in the event of a blow. Usually, at that season and in that region, the east trades prevailed with great steadiness, sometimes diverging a little south of east, as at present, and generally blowing fresh. But, for a short time previously to, and ever since, the tornado, the wind had been unsettled, the old currents appearing to regain their ascendancy

by fits, and then losing it in squalls, contrary currents, and even by short calms.

The conference between Jack Tier and Rose was frank and confidential.

"We must depend mainly on you," said the latter, turning to look toward the spot where Mulford lay, buried in the deepest sleep that had ever gained power over him. "Harry is *so* fatigued! It would be shameful to awaken him a moment sooner than is necessary."

"Ay, ay; so it is always with young women when they lets a young man gain their ears," answered Jack, without the least circumlocution; "so it is, and so it always will be, I 'm afeard. Nevertheless, men is willians."

Rose was not affronted at this plain allusion to the power that Mulford had obtained over her feelings. It would seem that Jack had got to be so intimate in the cabins that his sex was, in a measure, forgotten; and it is certain that his recent services were not. Without a question, but for his interference, the pretty Rose Budd would at that moment have been the prisoner of Spike, and most probably the victim of his design to compel her to marry him.

"All men are not Stephen Spikes," said Rose, earnestly, "and least of all is Harry Mulford to be reckoned as one of his sort. But we must manage to take care of the schooner the whole night, and let Harry get his rest. He wished to be called at twelve, but we can easily let the hour go by, and not awaken him."

"The commanding officer ought not to be sarved so, Miss Rose. What he says is to be done."

"I know it, Jack, as to ordinary matters; but Harry left these orders that we might have our share of rest, and for no other reason at all. And what is to prevent our having it? We are four, and can divide ourselves into two watches; one watch can sleep, while the other keeps a look-out."

"Ay, ay, and pretty watches they *would* be! There 's Madam Budd, now; why, she 's quite a navigator, and knows all about weerin' and haulin', and I dares to say could put the schooner about, to keep her off the reef on a pinch; though which way the craft would come round could best be told a'ter it has been done.

It's as much as *I'd* undertake myself, Miss Rose, to take care of the schooner, should it come on to blow; and as for you, Madam Budd, and that squalling Irish woman, you'd be no better than so many housewives ashore."

"We have strength, and we have courage, and we can pull, as you have seen. I know very well which way to put the helm, now; and Biddy is as strong as you are yourself, and could help me all I wished. Then we could always call you at need, and have your assistance. Nay, Harry himself can be called, if there should be a real necessity for it, and I *do* wish he may not be disturbed until there *is* that necessity."

It was with a good deal of reluctance that Jack allowed himself to be persuaded into this scheme. He insisted for a long time that an officer should be called at the hour mentioned by himself, and declared he had never known such an order neglected, "marchant-man, privateer, or man-of-war." Rose prevailed over his scruples, however, and there was a meeting of the three females to make the final arrangements. Mrs. Budd, a kind-hearted woman at

the worst, gave her assent most cheerfully, though Rose was a little startled with the nature of the reasoning with which it was accompanied.

"You are quite right, Rosy, dear," said the aunt; "and the thing is very easily done. I 've long wanted to keep one watch at sea; just one watch; to complete my maritime education. Your poor uncle used to say, 'Give my wife but one night-watch, and you 'd have as good a seaman in her, as heart could wish.' I 'm sure I 've had night watches enough with him, and his ailings; but it seems that *they* were not the sort of watches he meant. Indeed, I did n't know till this evening there were so many watches in the world, at all. But, this is just what I want, and just what I 'm resolved to have. Tier shall command one watch, and I 'll command the other. Jack's shall be the 'dog-watch,' as they call it, and mine shall be the 'middle-watch,' and last till morning. You shall be in Jack's watch, Rose, and Biddy shall be in mine. You know a good deal that Jack don't know, and Biddy can do a good deal I 'm rather too stout to do. I don't like pulling

ropes, but as for *ordering*, I 'll turn my back on no captain's widow out of York."

Rose had her own misgivings on the subject of her aunt's issuing orders on such a subject to any one; but she made the best of necessity, and completed the arrangements without further discussion. Her great anxiety was to secure a good night's rest for Harry, already feeling a woman's care in the comfort and ease of the man she loved. And Rose did love Harry Mulford warmly and sincerely. If the very decided preference with which she regarded him before they sailed, had not absolutely amounted to passion, it had come so very near it as to render that access of feeling certain, under the influence of the association and events which succeeded. We have not thought it necessary to relate a tithe of the interviews and intercourse that had taken place between the handsome mate and the pretty Rose Budd, during the month they had now been shipmates, having left the reader to imagine the natural course of things under such circumstances. Nevertheless, the plighted troth had not been actually given until Harry

joined her on the islet, at a moment when she fancied herself abandoned to a fate almost as serious as death. Rose had seen Mulford quit the brig, had watched the mode and manner of his escape, and in almost breathless amazement, and felt how dear to her he had become, by the glow of delight which warmed her heart, when assured that he could not, would not, forsake her, even though he remained at the risk of life. She was now, true to the instinct of her sex, mostly occupied in making such a return for an attachment so devoted as became her tenderness and the habits of her mind.

As Mrs. Budd chose what she was pleased to term the 'middle-watch,' giving to Jack Tier and Rose her 'dog-watch,' the two last were first on duty. It is scarcely necessary to say that the captain's widow got the names of the watches all wrong, as she got the names of everything else about a vessel; but the plan was to divide the night equally between these *quasi* mariners, giving the first half to those who were first on the look-out, and the remainder to their successors. It soon became so calm that Jack left the helm, and came and sat

by Rose on the trunk, were they conversed confidentially for a long time. Although the reader will, hereafter, be enabled to form some plausible conjectures on the subject of this dialogue, we shall give him no part of it here. All that need now be said, is to add, that Jack did most of the talking, that his past life was the principal theme, and that the terrible Stephen Spike, he from whom they were now so desirous of escaping, was largely mixed up with the adventures recounted. Jack found in his companion a deeply interested listener, although this was by no means the first time they had gone over together the same story, and discussed the same events. The conversation lasted until Tier, who watched the glass, seeing that its sands had run out for the last time, announced the hour of midnight. This was the moment when Mulford should have been called, but when Mrs. Budd and Biddy Noon were actually awakened in his stead.

"Now, dear aunty," said Rose, as she parted from the new watch to go and catch a little sleep herself, "remember you are not to awaken Harry first, but to call Tier and myself. It

would have done your heart good to have seen how sweetly he has been sleeping all this time. I do not think he has stirred once since his head was laid on that bunch of sails; and there he is, at this moment, sleeping like an infant!"

"Yes," returned the relict, "it is always so with your true maritime people. I have been sleeping a great deal more soundly, the whole of the dog-watch, than I ever slept at home, in my own excellent bed. But it's your watch below, Rosy, and contrary to rule for you to stay on the deck after you've been relieved. I've heard this a thousand times."

Rose was not sorry to lie down; and her head was scarcely on its pillow in the cabin, before she was fast asleep. As for Jack, he found a place among Mulford's sails, and was quickly in the same state.

To own the truth, Mrs. Budd was not quite as much at ease in her new station, for the first half hour, as she had fancied to herself might prove to be the case. It was a flat calm, it is true; but the widow felt oppressed with responsibility and the novelty of her situation. Time and again had she said, and even ima-

gined, she should be delighted to fill the very station she then occupied, or to be in charge of a deck, in a "middle-watch." In this instance, however, as in so many others, reality did not equal anticipation. She wished to be doing everything, but did not know how to do anything. As for Biddy, she was even worse off than her mistress. A month's experience, or, for that matter, a twelvemonth's, could not unravel to her the mysteries of even a schooner's rigging. Mrs. Budd had placed her "at the wheel," as she called it, though the vessel had no wheel, being steered by a tiller on deck, in the 'long-shore fashion. In stationing Biddy, the widow told her that she was to play "tricks at the wheel," leaving it to the astounded Irish woman's imagination to discover what those tricks were. Failing in ascertaining what might be the nature of her "tricks at the wheel," Biddy was content to do nothing, and nothing, under the circumstances, was perhaps the very best thing she could have done.

Little was required to be done for the first four hours of Mrs. Budd's watch. All that

time Rose slept in her berth, and Mulford and Jack Tier on their sail; while Biddy had played the wheel a "trick," indeed, by lying down on deck, and sleeping, too, as soundly as if she were in the County Down itself. But there was to be an end to this tranquillity. Suddenly the wind began to blow. At first, the breeze came in fitful puffs, which were neither very strong nor very lasting. This induced Mrs. Budd to awaken Biddy. Luckily, a schooner without a topsail could not very well be taken aback, especially as the head-sheets worked on travellers; and Mrs. Budd and her assistant contrived to manage the tiller very well for the first hour that these varying puffs of wind lasted. It is true, the tiller was lashed, and it is also true the schooner ran in all directions, having actually headed to all the cardinal points of the compass, under her present management. At length Mrs. Budd became alarmed. A puff of wind came so strong as to cause the vessel to lie over so far as to bring the water into the lee scuppers. She called Jack Tier herself, therefore, and sent Biddy down to awaken Rose. In a minute

both these auxiliaries appeared on deck. The wind just then lulled; and Rose, supposing her aunt was frightened at trifles, insisted on it that Harry should be permitted to sleep on. He had turned over once in the course of the night, but not once had he raised his head from his pillow.

As soon as reinforced, Mrs. Budd began to bustle about, and to give commands, such as they were, in order to prove that she was unterrified. Jack Tier gaped at her elbow, and by way of something to do, he laid his hand on the painter of the Swash's boat, which boat was towing astern, and remarked that "some know-nothing had belayed it with three half-hitches." This was enough for the relict. She had often heard the saying that "*three* half-hitches lost the king's long-boat," and she busied herself at once in repairing so imminent an evil. It was far easier for the good woman to talk than to act, she became what is called "all fingers and thumbs," and in loosening the third half-hitch, she cast off the two others. At that instant a puff of wind struck the schooner again, and the end of the painter got

away from the widow, who had a last glimpse at the boat, as the vessel darted a-head, leaving its little tender to vanish in the gloom of the night.

Jack was excessively provoked at this accident, for he had foreseen the possibility of having recourse to that boat, yet, in order to escape from Spike. By abandoning the schooner, and pulling on to the reef, it might have been possible to get out of their pursuer's hands, when all other means should fail them. As he was at the tiller, he put his helm up, and run off, until far enough to leeward to be to the westward of the boat, when he might tack, fetch and recover it. Nevertheless, it now blew much harder than he liked, for the schooner seemed to be unusually tender. Had he the force to do it, he would have brailed the foresail. He desired Rose to call Mulford, but she hesitated about complying.

"Call him—call the mate, I say," cried out Jack, in a voice that proved how much he was in earnest. "These puffs come heavy, I can tell you, and they come often, too. Call him —call him at once, Miss Rose, for it is time to

tack if we wish to recover the boat. Tell him, too, to brail the foresail, while we are in stays —that's right; another call will start him up."

The other call was given, aided by a gentle shake from Rose's hand. Harry was on his feet in a moment. A passing instant was necessary to clear his faculties, and to recover the tenor of his thoughts. During that instant the mate heard Jack Tier's shrill cry of "hard a-lee—get in that foresail—bear a-hand—in with it, I say."

The wind came rushing and roaring, and the flaps of the canvas were violent and heavy.

"In with the foresail, I say," shouted Jack Tier. "She flies round like a top, and will be off the wind on the other tack, presently. Bear a-hand!—bear a-hand! It looks black as night, to windward."

Mulford then regained all his powers. He sprang to the foresheet, calling on the others for aid. The violent surges produced by the wind, prevented his grasping the sheet as soon as he could wish, and the vessel whirled round on her heel, like a steed that is frightened. At that critical and dangerous instant, when

the schooner was nearly without motion through the water, a squall struck the flattened sails, and bowed her down as the willow bends to the gale. Mrs. Budd and Biddy screamed as usual, and Jack shouted until his voice seemed cracked, to "let go the headsheets." Mulford did make one leap forward, to execute this necessary office, when the inclining plane of the deck told him it was too late. The wind fairly howled for a minute, and over went the schooner, the remains of her cargo shifting as she capsized, in a way to bring her very nearly bottom upward.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ay, fare you well, fair gentleman.
As You Like It.

WHILE the tyro believes the vessel is about to capsize at every puff of wind, the practised seaman alone knows when danger truly besets him in this particular form. Thus it was with Harry Mulford, when the Mexican schooner went over, as related in the close of the preceding chapter. He felt no alarm until the danger actually came. Then, indeed, no one there was so quickly or so thoroughly apprised of what the result would be; and he directed all his exertions to meet the exigency. While there was the smallest hope of success, he did not lessen in the least his endeavours to save the vessel; making almost superhuman efforts to cast off the foresheet, so as to relieve the schooner from the pressure of one of her sails. But no sooner did he hear the barrels in the hold surging to leeward, and feel, by the inclination of the deck beneath his feet, that nothing

could save the craft, than he abandoned the sheet, and sprang to the assistance of Rose. It was time he did; for, having followed him into the vessel's lee waist, she was the first to be submerged in the sea, and would have been hopelessly drowned, but for Mulford's timely succour. Women *might* swim more readily than men, and do so swim in those portions of the world where the laws of nature are not counteracted by human conventions. Rose Budd, however, had received the vicious education which civilized society inflicts on her sex; and, a matter of course, was totally helpless in an element in which it was the design of divine Providence she should possess the common means of sustaining herself, like every other being endued with animal life. Not so with Mulford; he swam with ease and force, and had no difficulty in sustaining Rose until the schooner had settled into her new berth, or in hauling her on the vessel's bottom, immediately after.

Luckily, there was no swell, or so little as not to endanger those who were on the schooner's bilge; and Mulford had no sooner

placed her in momentary safety at least, whom he prized far higher than his own life, than he bethought him of his other companions. Jack Tier had hauled himself up to windward by the rope that steadied the tiller, and he had called on Mrs. Budd to imitate his example. It was so natural for even a woman to grasp at anything like a rope at such a moment, that the widow instinctively obeyed, while Biddy seized at random the first thing of the sort that offered. Owing to these fortunate chances, Jack and Mrs. Budd succeeded in reaching the quarter of the schooner, the former actually getting up on the bottom of the wreck, on to which he was enabled to float the widow, who was almost as buoyant as cork, as, indeed, was the case with Jack himself. All the stern and bows of the vessel were under water, in consequence of her leanness forward and aft; but though submerged, she offered a precarious footing, even in those extremities, to such as could reach them. On the other hand, the place where Rose stood, or the bilge of the vessel, was two or three feet above the surface of the sea, though slippery and inclining in shape.

It was not half a minute from the time that Mulford sprang to Rose's succour, ere he had her on the vessel's bottom. In another half-minute he had waded down on the schooner's counter, where Jack Tier was lustily calling to him for "help," and assisted the widow to her feet, and supported her until she stood at Rose's side. Leaving the last in her aunt's arms, half distracted between dread and joy, he turned to the assistance of Biddy. The rope at which the Irish woman had caught, was a straggling end that had been made fast to the main channels of the schooner, for the support of a fender, and had been hauled partly in-board to keep it out of the water. Biddy had found no difficulty in dragging herself up to the chains, therefore: and had she been content to sustain herself by the rope, leaving as much of her body submerged as comported with breathing, her task would have been easy. But, like most persons who do not know how to swim, the good woman was fast exhausting her strength by vain efforts to walk on the surface of an element that was never made to sustain her. Unpractised persons, in such situations, cannot

be taught to believe that their greatest safety is in leaving as much of their bodies as possible beneath the water, keeping the mouth and nose alone free for breath. But we have even seen instances in which men, who were in danger of drowning, seemed to believe it might be possible for them to crawl over the waves on their hands and knees. The philosophy of the contrary course is so very simple, that one would fancy a very child might be made to comprehend it; yet it is rare to find one unaccustomed to the water, and who is suddenly exposed to its dangers, that does not resort, under the pressure of present alarm, to the very reverse of the true means to save his or her life.

Mulford had no difficulty in finding Bridget, whose exclamations of "murther!" "help!" "he-l-lup!" "Jasus!" and other similar cries, led him directly to the spot, where she was fast drowning herself by her own senseless struggles. Seizing her by the arm, the active young mate soon placed her on her feet, though her cries did not cease until she was ordered by her mistress to keep silence.

Having thus rescued the whole of his com-

panions from immediate danger, Mulford began to think of the future. He was seized with sudden surprise that the vessel did not sink, and for a minute he was unable to account for the unusual fact. On the former occasion, the schooner had gone down almost as soon as she fell over; but now she floated with so much buoyancy as to leave most of her keel and all of her bilge on one side quite clear of the water. As one of the main hatches was off, and the cabin-doors and booby-hatch doors forward were open, and all were under water, it required a little reflection on the part of Mulford to understand on what circumstance all their lives now depended. The mate soon ascertained the truth, however, and we may as well explain it to the reader in our own fashion, in order to put him on a level with the young seaman.

The puff of wind, or little squall, had struck the schooner at the most unfavourable moment for her safety. She had just lost her way in tacking, and the hull not moving ahead, as happens when a craft is thus assailed with the motion on her, all the power of the wind was expended in the direction necessary to capsize

her. Another disadvantage arose from the want of motion. The rudder, which acts solely by pressing against the water as the vessel meets it, was useless, and it was not possible to luff, and throw the wind from the sails, as is usually practised by fore-and-aft rigged craft, in moments of such peril. In consequence of these united difficulties, the shifting of the cargo in the hold, the tenderness of the craft itself, and the force of the squall, the schooner had gone so far over as to carry all three of the openings to her interior suddenly under water, where they remained held by the pressure of the cargo that had rolled to leeward. Had not the water completely covered these openings or hatches, the schooner must have sunk in a minute or two, or by the time Mulford had got all his companions safe on her bilge. But they were completely submerged, and so continued to be, which circumstance alone prevented the vessel from sinking, as the following simple explanation will show.

Any person who will put an empty tumbler, bottom upwards, into a bucket of water, will find that the water will not rise within the tum-

bler more than an inch at most. At that point it is arrested by the resistance of the air, which, unable to escape, and compressed into a narrow compass, forms a body that the other fluid cannot penetrate. It is on this simple and familiar principle that the chemist keeps his gases in inverted glasses, placing them on shelves slightly submerged in water. Thus it was, then, that the schooner continued to float, though nearly bottom upwards, and with three inlets open, by which the water could and did penetrate. A considerable quantity of the element had rushed in at the instant of capsizing, but, meeting with resistance from the compressed and pent air, its progress had been arrested, and the wreck continued to float, sustained by the buoyancy that was imparted to it, in containing so large a body of a substance no heavier than atmospheric air. After displacing its weight of water, enough of buoyancy remained to raise the keel a few feet above the level of the sea.

As soon as Mulford had ascertained the facts of their situation, he communicated them to his companions, encouraging them to hope for

eventual safety. It was true, their situation was nearly desperate, admitting that the wreck should continue to float for ever, since they were nearly without food, or anything to drink, and had no means of urging the hull through the water. They must float, too, at the mercy of the winds and waves; and should a sea get up, it might soon be impossible for Mulford himself to maintain his footing on the bottom of the wreck. All this the young man had dimly shadowed forth to him, through his professional experience; but the certainty of the vessel's not sinking immediately had so far revived his spirits, as to cause him to look on the bright side of the future, pale as that glimmering of hope was made to appear whenever reason cast one of its severe glances athwart it.

Harry had no difficulty in making Rose comprehend their precise situation. Her active and clear mind understood at once the causes of their present preservation, and most of the hazards of the future. It was not so with Jack Tier. He was composed, even resigned; but he could not see the reason why the schooner still floated.

"I know that the cabin-doors were open," he said; "and if they wasn't, of no great matter would it be, since the joints ar' n't caulked, and the water would run through them as through a sieve. I'am afeard, Mr. Mulford, we shall find the wreck going from under our feet afore long, and when we least wish it, perhaps."

"I tell you the wreck will float so long as the air remains in its hold," returned the mate, cheerfully. "Do you not see how buoyant it is?—the certain proof that there is plenty of air within. So long as that remains, the hull *must* float."

"I've always understood," said Jack, sticking to his opinion, "that wessels floats by vartue of water, and not by vartue of air; and, that when the water gets on the wrong side on 'em, there's little hope left of keepin' 'em up."

"What has become of the boat?" suddenly cried the mate. "I have been so much occupied as to have forgotten the boat. In that boat we might all of us still reach Key West. I see nothing of the boat!"

A profound silence succeeded this sudden

and unexpected question. All knew that the boat was gone, and all knew that it had been lost by the widow's pertinacity and clumsiness; but no one felt disposed to betray her at that grave moment. Mulford left the bilge, and waded as far aft as it was at all prudent for him to proceed, in the vain hope that the boat might be there, fastened by its painter to the schooner's tafrail, as he had left it, but concealed from view by the darkness of the night. Not finding what he was after, he returned to his companions, still uttering exclamations of surprise at the unaccountable loss of the boat. Rose now told him that the boat had got adrift some ten or fifteen minutes before the accident befell them, and that they were actually endeavouring to recover it when the the squall, which capsized the schooner, struck them.

"And why did you not call me, Rose?" asked Harry, with a little of gentle reproach in his manner. "It must have soon been my watch on deck; and it would have been better that I should lose half an hour of my watch below, than we should lose the boat."

Rose was now obliged to confess that the

time for calling him had long been past, and that the faint streak of light, which was just appearing in the east, was the near approach of of day. This explanation was made gently, but frankly; and Mulford experienced a glow of pleasure at his heart, even in that moment of jeopardy, when he understood Rose's motive for not having him disturbed. As the boat was gone, with little or no prospect of its being recovered again, no more was said about it; and the widow, who had stood on thorns the while, had the relief of believing that her awkwardness was forgotten.

It was such a relief from an imminent danger to have escaped from drowning when the schooner capsized, that those on her bottom did not, for some little time, realize all the terrors of their actual situation. The inconvenience of being wet was a trifle not to be thought of; and, in fact, the light summer dresses worn by all, linen or cotton as they were entirely, were soon effectually dried in the wind. The keel made a tolerably convenient seat, and the whole party placed themselves on it, to await the return of day, in order to obtain

a view of all that their situation offered in the way of a prospect. While thus awaiting, a broken and short dialogue occurred.

"Had you stood to the northward the whole night?" asked Mulford, gloomily, of Jack Tier; for gloomily he began to feel, as all the facts of their case began to press more closely on his mind. "If so, we must be well off the reef, and out of the track of wreckers and turtlers. How had you the wind, and how did you head before the accident happened?"

"The wind was light the whole time, and for some hours it was nearly calm," answered Jack, in the same vein. "I kept the schooner's head to the nor'ard, until I thought we were getting too far off our course, and then I put her about. I do not think we could have been any great distance from the reef, when the boat got away from us, and I suppose we are in its neighbourhood now; for I was tacking to fall in with the boat when the craft went over."

"To fall in with the boat! Did you keep off to leeward of it, then, that you expected to fetch it by tacking?"

"Ay, a good bit: and I think the boat is

now away here to windward of us, drifting athwart our bows."

This was important news to Mulford. Could he only get that boat, the chances of being saved would be increased a hundredfold, nay, would almost amount to a certainty; whereas so long as the wind held to the southward and eastward, the drift of the wreck must be toward the open water, and consequently so much the further removed from the means of succour. The general direction of the trades in that quarter of the world, is east; and should they get round into their old and proper quarter, it would not benefit them much; for the reef running south-west, they could scarcely hope to hit the Dry Tortugas again, in their drift, were life even spared them sufficiently long to float the distance. Then there might be currents, about which Mulford knew nothing with certainty; they might set them in any direction; and did they exist, as was almost sure to be the case, were much more powerful than the wind in controlling the movements of a wreck.

The mate strained his eyes in the direction pointed out by Jack Tier, in the hope of dis-

covering the boat through the haze of the morning; and he actually did discern something that, it appeared to him, might be the much desired little craft. If he were right, there was every reason to think the boat would drift down so near them, as to enable him to recover it by swimming. This cheering intelligence was communicated to his companions, who received it with gratitude and delight. But the approach of day gradually dispelled that hope, the object which Mulford had mistaken for the boat, within two hundred yards of the wreck, turning out to be a small, low, but bare hummock of the reef, at a distance of more than two miles.

"That is a proof that we are not far from the reef at least," cried Mulford, willing to encourage those around him all he could, and really much relieved at finding himself so near even this isolated fragment of *terra firma*. "This fact is the next encouraging thing to finding ourselves near the boat, or to falling in with a sail."

"Ay, ay," said Jacky gloomily; "boat or no boat, 'twill make no great matter of difference

now. *There's* customers that'll be sartain to take all the grists you can send to their mill."

"What things are those glancing about the vessel?" cried Rose, almost in the same breath; "those dark, sharp-looking sticks—see, there are five or six of them; and they move as if fastened to something under the water that pulls them about."

"Them's the customers I mean, Miss Rose," answered Jack, in the same strain as that in which he had first spoken; "they're the same thing at sea as lawyers be ashore, and seem made to live on other folks. Them's sharks."

"And yonder is truly the boat!" added Mulford, with a sigh that almost amounted to a groan. The light had by this time so far returned, as to enable the party not only to see the fins of half-a-dozen sharks, which were already prowling about the wreck, the almost necessary consequence of their proximity to a reef in that latitude, but actually to discern the boat drifting down toward them, at a distance that promised to carry it past, within the reach of Mulford's powers of swimming, though not as near as he could have wished, even under

more favourable circumstances. Had their extremity been greater, or had Rose begun to suffer from hunger or thirst, Mulford might have attempted the experiment of endeavouring to regain the boat, though the chances of death by means of the sharks would be more than equal to those of escape; but still fresh, and not yet feeling even the heat of the sun of that low latitude, he was not quite goaded into such an act of desperation. All that remained for the party, therefore, was to sit on the keel of the wreck, and gaze with longing eyes at a little object floating past, which, once at their command, might so readily be made to save them from a fate that already began to appear terrible in the perspective. Near an hour was thus consumed ere the boat was about half a mile to leeward; during which scarcely an eye was turned from it for one instant, or a word was spoken.

"It is beyond my reach, now," Mulford at length exclaimed, sighing heavily, like one who became conscious of some great and irretrievable loss. "Were there no sharks, I could hardly venture to attempt swimming so far,

with the boat drifting from me at the same time."

"I should never consent to let you make the trial, Harry," murmured Rose, "though it were only half as far."

Another pause succeeded.

"We have now the light of day," resumed the mate, a minute or two later, "and may see our true situation. No sail is in sight, and the wind stands steadily in its old quarter. Still, I do not think we leave the reef. There, you may see breakers off here at the southward, and it seems as if more rocks rise above the sea in that direction. I do not know that our situation would be any the better, however, were we actually on them, instead of being on this floating wreck."

"The rocks will never sink," said Jack Tier, with so much emphasis as to startle the listeners.

"I do not think this hull will sink until we are taken off it, or are beyond caring whether it sink or swim," returned Mulford.

"I do not know that, Mr. Mulford. Nothing keeps us up but the air in the hold, you say."

"Certainly not; but that air will suffice as long as it remains there."

"And what do you call these things?" rejoined the assistant steward, pointing at the water near him, in or on which no one else saw anything worthy of attention.

Mulford, however, was not satisfied with a cursory glance, but went nearer to the spot were Tier was standing. Then, indeed, he saw to what the steward alluded, and was impressed by it, though he said nothing. Hundreds of little bubbles rose to the surface of the water, much as one sees them rising in springs. These bubbles are often met with in lakes and other comparatively shallow waters, but they are rarely seen in those of the ocean. The mate understood, at a glance, that those he now beheld were produced by the air which escaped from the hold of the wreck, in small quantities at a time, it was true, but by a constant and increasing process. The great pressure of the water forced this air through crevices so minute, that, under ordinary circumstances, they would have proved impenetrable to this, as they were still to the other fluid, though

they now permitted the passage of the former. It might take a long time to force the air from the interior of the vessel by such means, but the result was as certain as it might be slow. As constant dropping will wear a stone, so might the power that kept the wreck afloat be exhausted by the ceaseless rising of these minute air-bubbles.

Although Mulford was entirely sensible of the nature of this new source of danger, we cannot say he was much affected by it at the moment. It seemed to him far more probable that they must die of exhaustion long before the wreck would lose all its buoyancy by this slow process, than that even the strongest of their number could survive for such a period. The new danger, therefore, lost most of its terrors under this view of the subject, though it certainly did not add to the small sense of security that remained, to know that inevitably their fate must be sealed through its agency, should they be able to hold out for a sufficient time against hunger and thirst. It caused Mulford to muse in silence for many more minutes.

"I hope we are not altogether without food," the mate at length said. "It sometimes happens that persons at sea carry pieces of biscuit in their pockets, especially those who keep watch at night. The smallest morsel is now of the last importance."

At this suggestion, every one set about an examination. The result was, that neither Mrs. Budd nor Rose had a particle of food of any sort about their persons. Biddy produced from her pockets, however, a whole biscuit, a large bunch of excellent raisins that she had filched from the steward's stores, and tw oapples; the last being the remains of some fruit that Spike had procured a month earlier in New York. Mulford had half a biscuit, at which he had been accustomed to nibble in his watches; and Jack lugged out, along with a small plug of tobacco, a couple of sweet oranges. Here, then, was everything in the shape of victuals or drink, that could be found for the use of five persons, in all probability for many days. The importance of securing it for equal distribution, was so obvious, that Mulford's proposal to do so, met with a common assent. The whole was put in

Mrs. Budd's bag, and she was entrusted with the keeping of this precious store.

"It may be harder to abstain from food at first, when we have suffered for its want, than it will become after a little endurance," said the mate. "We are now strong, and it will be wiser to fast as long as we conveniently can to-day, and relieve our hunger by a moderate allowance toward evening, than to waste our means by too much indulgence at a time when we are strong. Weakness will be sure to come if we remain long on the wreck."

"Have you ever suffered in this way, Harry?" demanded Rose, with interest.

"I have, and that dreadfully. But a merciful Providence came to my rescue then, and it may not fail me now. The seaman is accustomed to carry his life in his hand, and to live on the edge of eternity."

The truth of this was so apparent as to produce a thoughtful silence. Anxious glances were cast around the horizon from time to time, in quest of any sail that might come in sight; but uselessly. None appeared, and the day advanced without bringing the slightest

prospect of relief. Mulford could see, by the now almost sunken hummocks, that they were slowly drifting along the reef, toward the southward and eastward, a current no doubt acting slightly from the north-west. Their proximity to the reef, however, was of no advantage, as the distance was still so great as to render any attempt to reach it, even on the part of the mate, unavailable. Nor would he have been any better off could he have gained a spot on the rocks, that was shallow enough to admit of his walking, since wading about in such a place would have been less desirable than to be floating where he was.

The want of water to drink threatened to be the great evil. Of this the party on the wreck had not a single drop! As the warmth of the day was added to the feverish feeling produced by excitement, they all experienced thirst, though no one murmured. So utterly without means of relieving this necessity did each person know them all to be, that no one spoke on the subject at all. In fact, shipwreck never produced a more complète destitution of all the ordinary agents of helping themselves in any

form or manner, than was the case here. So sudden and complete had been the disaster, that not a single article, beyond those on the persons of the sufferers, came even in view. The masts, sails, rigging, spare spars—in a word, everything belonging to the vessel was submerged and hidden from their sight, with the exception of a portion of the vessel's bottom, which might be forty feet in length, and some ten or fifteen in width, including that which was above water on both sides of the keel, though one only of these sides was available to the females, as a place to move about on. Had Mulford only a boathook, he would have felt it a relief; for not only did the sharks increase in number, but they grew more audacious, swimming so near the wreck that, more than once, Mulford apprehended that some one of the boldest of them might make an effort literally to board them. It is true, he had never known of one of these fishes attempting to quit his own element in pursuit of his prey; but such things were reported, and those around the wreck swam so close, and seemed so eager to get at those who were on it, that there

really might be some excuse for fancying they might resort to unusual means of effecting their object. It is probable that, like all other animals, they were emboldened by their own numbers, and were acting in a sort of concert, that was governed by some of the many mysterious laws of nature that have still escaped human observation.

Thus passed the earlier hours of that appalling day. Toward noon Mulford had insisted on the females dividing one of the oranges between them, and extracting its juice by way of assuaging their thirst. The effect was most grateful, as all admitted; and even Mrs. Budd urged Harry and Tier to take a portion of the remaining orange; but this both steadily refused. Mulford did consent to receive a small portion of one of the apples, more with a view of moistening his throat than to appease his hunger, though it had, in a slight degree, the latter effect also. As for Jack Tier, he declined even the morsel of apple, saying that tobacco answered his purpose, as indeed it temporarily might.

It was near sunset, when the steward's assist-

ant called Mulford aside, and whispered to him that he had something private to communicate. The mate bade him say on, as they were out of ear-shot of their companions.

"I've been in sitiations like this afore," said Jack, "and one larns exper'ence by exper'ence. I know how cruel it is on the feelin's to have the hopes disapp'inted in these cases, and therefore shall proceed with caution. But, Mr. Mulford, there's a sail in sight, if there is a drop of water in the Gulf!"

"A sail, Jack! I trust in heaven you are not deceived!"

"Old eyes are true eyes in such matters, sir. Be careful not to start the women. They go off like gunpowder, and, Lord help'em! have no more command over themselves, when you loosen 'em once, than so many flying-fish with so many dolphins a'ter them. Look hereaway, sir, just clear of the Irish woman's bonnet, a little broad off the spot where the reef was last seen—if that an't a sail, my name is not Jack Tier."

A sail there was, sure enough! It was so very distant, however, as to render its character

still uncertain, though Mulford fancied it was a square-rigged vessel heading to the northward. By its position it must be in one of the channels of the reef, and by its course, if he were not deceived, it was standing through, from the main passage along the southern side of the rocks, to come out on the northern. All this was favourable; and at first the young mate felt such a throbbing of the heart as we all experience when great and unexpected good intelligence is received. A moment's reflection, however, made him aware how little was to be hoped for from this vessel. In the first place, her distance was so great as to render it uncertain even which way she was steering. Then, there was the probability that she would pass at so great a distance as to render it impossible to perceive an object as low as the wreck, and the additional chance of her passing in the night. Under all the circumstances, therefore, Mulford felt convinced that there was very little probability of their receiving any succour from the strange sail; and he fully appreciated Jack Tier's motive in forbearing to give the usual call of "Sail, ho!" when he made his disco-

very. Still, he could not deny himself the pleasure of communicating to Rose the cheering fact that a vessel was actually in sight. She could not reason on the circumstances as he had done, and might at least pass several hours of comparative happiness by believing that there was some visible chance of delivery.

The females received the intelligence with very different degrees of hope. Rose was delighted. To her their rescue appeared an event so very probable now, that Harry Mulford almost regretted he had given rise to an expectation which he himself feared was to be disappointed. The feelings of Mrs. Budd were more suppressed. The wreck and her present situation were so completely at variance with all her former notions of the sea and its incidents, that she was almost dumbfounded, and feared either to speak or to think. Biddy differed from either of her mistresses, the young or the old; she appeared to have lost *all* hope, and her physical energy was fast giving way under her profound moral debility.

From the return of light that day, Mulford had thought, if it were to prove that Providence

had withdrawn its protecting hand from [illegible] Biddy, who to all appearance ought to [illegible] longest liver among the females at least, would be the first to sink under her sufferings. [illegible] is the influence of moral causes on the mere animal.

Rose saw the night shut in around them, amid the solemn solitude of the ocean, with a mingled sensation of awe and hope. She had prayed devoutly and often in the course of the preceding day, and her devotions had contributed to calm her spirits. Once or twice, while kneeling with her head bowed to the keel, she had raised her eyes toward Harry with a look of entreaty, as if she would implore him to humble his proud spirit, and place himself at her side, and ask that succour from God which was so much needed, and which indeed it began most seriously to appear that God alone could yield. The young mate did not comply, for his pride of profession and of manhood offered themselves as stumbling-blocks to prevent submission to his secret wishes. Though he rarely prayed, Harry Mulford was far from being an unbeliever, or one altogether

regardless of his duties and obligations to his Divine Creator. On the contrary, his heart was more disposed to resort to such means of self-abasement and submission, than he put in practice, and this because he had been taught to believe that the Anglo-Saxon mariner did not call on Hercules, on every occasion of difficulty and distress that occurred, as was the fashion of the Italian and Romish seamen, but he put his own shoulder to the wheel, confident that Hercules would not forget to help him who knew how to help himself. But Harry had great difficulty in withstanding Rose's silent appeal that evening, as she knelt at the keel for the last time, and turned her gentle eyes upward at him, as if to ask him once more to take his place at her side. Withstand the appeal he did, however, though in his inward spirit he prayed fervently to God to put away this dreadful affliction from the young and innocent creature before him. When these evening devotions were ended, the whole party became thoughtful and silent.

It was necessary to sleep, and arrangements were made to do so, if possible, with a proper

regard for their security. Mulford and [illegible] were to have the look-out, watch and [illegible] This was done that no vessel might pa[illegible] them unseen, and that any change in the weather might be noted and looked to. As it was, the wind had fallen, and seemed about to vary, though it yet stood in its old quarter, or a little more easterly, perhaps. As a consequence, the drift of the wreck, insomuch as it depended on the currents of the air, was more nearly in a line with the direction of the reef, and there was little ground for apprehending that they might be driven farther from it in the night. Although that reef offered in reality no place of safety that was available to his party, Mulford felt it as a sort of relief to be certain that it was not distant, possibly influenced by a vague hope that some passing wrecker or turtler might yet pick them up.

The bottom of the schooner and the destitute condition of the party admitted of only very simple arrangements for the night. The females placed themselves against the keel in the best manner they could, and thus endeavoured to get a little of the rest they so much needed.

The day had been warm, as a matter of course, and the contrast produced by the setting of the sun was at first rather agreeable than otherwise. Luckily, Rose had thrown a shawl over her shoulders, not long before the vessel capsized, and in this shawl she had been saved. It had been dried, and it now served for a light covering to herself and her aunt, and added essentially to their comfort. As for Biddy, she was too hardy to need a shawl, and she protested that she should not think of using one, had she been better provided. The patient, meek manner in which that humble but generous-hearted creature submitted to her fate, and the earnestness with which she had begged that "Miss Rosy" might have her morsel of the portion of biscuit each received for a supper, had sensibly impressed Mulford in her favour; and knowing how much more necessary food was to sustain one of her robust frame and sturdy habits, than to Rose, he had contrived to give the woman, unknown to herself, a double allowance. Nor was it surprising that Biddy did not detect this little act of fraud in her favour, for this double allowance was merely

a single mouthful. The want of water had made itself much more keenly felt than the want of food; for, as yet, anxiety, excitement, and apprehension prevented the appetite from being much awakened, while the claims of thirst were increased, rather than the reverse, by these very causes. Still, no one had complained, on this or any other account, throughout the whole of the long and weary day which had passed.

Mulford took the first look-out, with the intention of catching a little sleep, if possible, during the middle hours of the night, and of returning to his duty as morning approached. For the first hour nothing occurred to divert his attention from brooding on the melancholy circumstances of their situation. It seemed as if all around him had actually lost the sense of their cares in sleep, and no sound was audible amid that ocean waste, but the light washing of the water, as the gentle waves rolled at intervals against the weather side of the wreck. It was now that Mulford found a moment for prayer; and, seated on the keel, that he called on the divine aid, in a fervent but silent petition

to God, to put away this trial from the youthful and beautiful Rose, at least, though he himself perished. It was the first prayer that Mulford had made in many months, or since he had joined the Swash,—a craft in which that duty was seldom thought of.

A few minutes succeeded this petition, when Biddy spoke.

"Missus — Madam Budd — dear missus," half whispered the Irish woman, anxious not to disturb Rose, who lay farthest from her.— "Missus, bees ye asleep at sich a time as this?"

"No, Biddy; sleep and I are strangers to each other, and are likely to be till morning. What do you wish to say?"

"Anything is betther than my own t'oughts, missus dear, and I wants to talk to ye. Is it no wather at all they'll give us so long as we stay in this place?"

"There is no one to give it to us but God, poor Biddy, and he alone can say what, in his gracious mercy, it may please him to do. Ah! Biddy, I fear me that I did an unwise and

thoughtless thing, to bring my poor Rose to such a place as this. Were it to be done over again, the riches of Wall Street would not tempt me to be guilty of so wrong a thing!

The arm of Rose was thrown around her aunt's neck, and its gentle pressure announced how completely the offender was forgiven.

"I's very sorry for Miss Rose," rejoined Biddy, "and I suffers so much the more meself in thinking how hard it must be for the like of her to be wantin' in a swallow of fresh wather."

"It is no harder for me to bear it, poor Biddy," answered the gentle voice of our heroine, "than it is for yourself."

"It is meself, then? Sure am I, that if I had a quar-r-t of good swate wather from our own pump, and *that's* far betther is it than the Crothon the best day the Crothon ever seed—but, had I a quar-r-t of it, every dhrap would I give to you, Miss Rose, to app'ase your thirst, I would."

"Water would be a great relief to us all, just now, my excellent Biddy," answered Rose;

"and I wish we had but a tumbler full of that you name, to divide equally among the whole five of us."

"Is it divide? Then it would be ag'in dividin' that my voice would be raised, for that same r'ason that the tumbler would never hold as much as you could dhrink yourself, Miss Rose."

"Yet the tumbler full would be a great blessing for us all just now," murmured Mrs. Budd.

"And isn't mutthon good 'atin', ladies! Och! if I had but a good swate pratie, now, from my own native Ireland, and a dhrap of milk to help wash it down! It's mighty little that a body thinks of sich thrifles when there's abundance of them; but when there's none at all, they get to be stronger in the mind than riches and honours."

"You say the truth, Biddy," rejoined the mistress; "and there is a pleasure in talking of them, if one can't enjoy them. I've been thinking all the afternoon, Rose, what a delicious food is a good roast turkey, with cranberry sauce; and I wonder now that I have

not been more grateful for the very many that Providence has bestowed upon me in my time. My poor Mr. Budd was passionately fond of mutton, and I used wickedly to laugh at his fondness for it sometimes, when he always had his answer ready, and that was that there are no sheep at sea. How true that is, Rosy dear; —there are indeed no sheep at sea!"

"No, aunty," answered Rose's gentle voice from beneath the shawl, "there are no such animals on the ocean; but God is with us here as much as he would be in New York."

A long silence succeeded this simple remark of his well-beloved; and the young mate hoped that there would be no more of a dialogue every syllable of which was a dagger to his feelings. But nature was stronger than reflection in Mrs. Budd and Biddy, and the latter spoke again, after a pause of nearly a quarter of an hour.

"Pray for me, missus," she said, moaningly, "that I may sleep. A bit of sleep would do a body almost as much good as a bit of bread.—I won't say as much as a dhrap of wather."

"Be quiet, Biddy, and we *will* pray for you," answered Rose, who fancied by her breathing, that her aunt was about to forget her sufferings, for a brief space, in broken slumbers.

"Is it for you I'll do *that?*—and sure will I, Miss Rose. Niver would I have quitted Ireland, could I have thought there was sich a spot on this earth as a place where no wather was to be had."

This was the last of Biddy's audible complaints, for the remainder of this long and anxious watch of Mulford. He then set himself about an arrangement which shall be mentioned in its proper place. At twelve o'clock, or when he thought it was twelve, he called Jack Tier, who in turn called the mate again at four.

"It looks dark and threatening," said Mulford, as he rose to his feet and began to look about him once more, "though there does not appear to be any wind."

"It's a flat calm, Mr. Mate, and the darkness comes from yonder cloud, which seems likely to bring a little rain."

"Rain! Then God is indeed with us here.

You are right, Jack; rain must fall from that cloud. We must catch some of it, if it be only a drop to cool Rose's parched tongue."

"In what! answered Tier, gloomily. "She may wring her clothes when the shower is over, and in that way get a drop. I see no other method."

"I have bethought me of all that, and passed most of my watch in making the preparations."

Mulford then showed Tier what he had been about in the long and solitary hours of the first watch. It would seem that the young man had dug a little trench with his knife along the schooner's bottom, commencing two or three feet from the keel, and near the spot where Rose was lying, and carrying it as far as was convenient toward the run, until he reached a point where he had dug out a sort of reservoir to contain the precious fluid, should any be sent them by Providence. While doing this, there were no signs of rain; but the young man knew that a shower alone could save them from insanity, if not from death, and in speculating on the means of profiting by one, should it come, he had bethought him of this expe-

dient. The large knife of a seaman had served him a good turn in carrying on his work, to complete which there remained now very little to do, and that was in enlarging the receptacle for the water. The whole was already big enough to contain a pint, and it might easily be sufficiently enlarged to hold double that quantity.

Jack was no sooner made acquainted with what had been done, than he out knife and commenced tearing splinter after splinter from the planks, to help enlarge the reservoir. This could only be done by cutting on the surface, for the wood was not three inches in thickness, and the smallest hole *through* the plank would have led to the rapid escape of the air, and to the certain sinking of the wreck. It required a good deal of judgment to preserve the necessary level also, and Mulford was obliged to interfere more than once to prevent his companion from doing more harm than good. He succeeded, however, and had actually made a cavity that might contain more than a quart of water, when the first large drop fell from the heavens. This cavity was not a hole,

but a long, deep trench—deep for the circumstances—so nicely cut on the proper level, as to admit of its holding a fluid in the quantity mentioned.

"Rose — dearest — rise, and be ready to drink," said Mulford, tenderly disturbing the uneasy slumbers of his beloved. "It is about to rain; and God is with us here as he might be on the land."

"Wather!" exclaimed Biddy, who was awoke with the same call. "What a blessed thing is good swate wather! and sure am I we ought all to be thankful that there is such a precious gift in the wor-r-ld."

"Come, then," said Mulford, hurriedly, "it will soon rain—I hear it pattering on the sea. Come hither, all of you, and drink; as a merciful God furnishes the means."

This summons was not likely to be neglected. All arose in haste, and the word "water" was murmured from every lip. Biddy had less self-command than the oth rs, and she was heard saying aloud,—"Och! and did n't I dhrame of the blessed springs and wells of Ireland the night, and have n't I dhrunk at 'em all; but now

it's over, and I am awake, no good has't done me, and I'm ready to die for one dhrap of wather."

That drop soon came, however, and with it the blessed relief which such a boon bestows. Mulford had barely time to explain his arrangements, and to place the party on their knees, along its little reservoir and the gutter which led to it, when the pattering of the rain advanced along the sea with a deep rushing sound. Presently the uplifted faces and open mouths caught a few heavy straggling drops, to cool the parched tongues, when the water came tumbling down upon them in a thousand little streams. There was scarcely any wind, and merely the skirt of a large black cloud floated over the wreck, on which the rain fell barely one minute. But it fell as rain comes down within the tropics, and in sufficient quantities for all present purposes. Everybody drank, and found relief, and when all was over, Mulford ascertained by examination, that his receptacle for the fluid was still full to overflowing. The abstinence had not been of sufficient length nor the quantity taken of large enough amount, to produce injury, though the thirst was gene-

rally and temporarily appeased. It is probable that the coolness of the hour, day dawning as the cloud moved past, and the circumstance that the sufferers were wetted to their skins, contributed to the change.

"Oh, blessed, blessed wather!" exclaimed Biddy, as she rose from her knees; "America, after all, is n't as dhry a counthry as some say. I 've niver tasted swater wather in Ireland itself."

Rose murmured her thanksgiving in more appropriate language. A few exclamations also escaped Mrs. Budd, and Jack Tier had his sententious eulogy on the precious qualities of sweet water.

The wind rose as the day advanced, and a swell began to heave the wreck with a power that had hitherto been dormant. Mulford understood this to be a sign that there had been a blow at some distance from them, that had thrown the sea into a state of agitation, which extended itself beyond the influence of the wind. Eagerly did the young mate examine the horizon, as the curtain of night arose, inch by inch, as it might be, on the

watery panorama, in the hope that a vessel of some sort or other might be brought within the view. Nor was he wholly disappointed. The strange sail seen the previous evening was actually there; and, what was more, so near as to allow her hull to be distinctly visible. It was a ship under her square canvas, standing from between divided portions of the reef, as if getting to the northward, in order to avoid the opposing current of the Gulf Stream. Vessels bound to Mobile, New Orleans, and other ports along the coast of the Republic, in that quarter of the ocean, often did this; and when the young mate first caught glimpses of the shadowy outline of this ship, he supposed it to be some packet, or cotton-droger, standing for her port on the northern shore. But a few minutes removed the veil, and with it the error of this notion. A seaman could no longer mistake the craft. Her length, her square and massive hamper, with the symmetry of her spars, and the long straight outline of the hull, left no doubt that it was a cruiser with her hammocks unstowed. Mulford now cheerfully announced to his companions that the ship they so plainly

saw, scarcely a gun-shot distant from them, was the sloop-of-war which had already become a sort of an acquaintance.

"If we can succeed in making them see our signal," cried Mulford, "all will yet be well. Come, Jack, and help me to put abroad this shawl, the only ensign we can show."

The shawl of Rose was the signal spread. Tier and Mulford stood on the keel, and holding opposite corners, let the rest of the cloth blow out with the wind. For near an hour did these two extend their arms, and try all possible expedients to make their signal conspicuous. But, unfortunately, the wind blew directly toward the cruiser, and instead of exposing a surface of any breadth to the vision of those on board her, it must, at most, have offered little more than a flitting, waving line.

As the day advanced, sail was made on the cruiser. She had stood through the passage, in which she had been becalmed most of the night, under short canvas, but now she threw out fold after fold of her studding sails, and moved away to the westward, with the stately motion of a ship before the wind. No sooner

had she got far enough to the northward of the reef than she made a deviation from her course as first seen, turning her stern entirely to the wreck, and rapidly becoming less and less distinct to the eyes of those who floated on it.

Mulford saw the hopelessness of their case as it respected relief from this vessel; still he persevered in maintaining his position on the keel, tossing and waving the shawl in all the manners that his ingenuity could devise. He well knew, however, that their chances of being seen would have been trebled could they have been ahead instead of astern of the ship. Mariners have few occasions to look behind them, while a hundred watchful eyes are usually turned ahead, more especially when running near rocks and shoals. Mrs. Budd wept like an infant when she saw the sloop-of-war gliding away, reaching a distance that rendered sight useless in detecting an object that floated low on the water as the wreck. As for Neal unable to control her feelings, she [illegible] actually called to the crew of the [illegible] sel, as if her voice had [illegible] heard at [illegible] As for [illegible] ld be certain obtained its noon- [illegible] was extended over it

leagues. It was only by means of the earnest remonstrances of Rose that the faithful creature could be quieted.

"Why will ye not come to our relaif?" she cried, at the top of her voice. "Here are we, helpless as new-born babbies, and ye sailing away from us in a con*thrar*y way! D'ye not bethink you of the missus, who is much of a sailor, but not sich a one as to sail on a wrack; and poor Miss Rose, who is the cha-r-m and delight of all eyes. Only come and take off Miss Rose, and lave the rest of us, if ye so likes; for it's a sin and a shame to lave the likes of her to die in the midst of the ocean, as if she was no bether nor a fish. Then it will be soon that we shall ag'in fale the want of wather, and that, too, with nothing but wather to be seen on all sides of us."

"It is of no use," said Harry, mournfully, stooping down from the keel, and laying aside in weariness. "They cannot see us, and the dis night, the now so great as to render it certain out fold after. There is only one hope left, moved away to the to and fro by the tides motion of a ship before the wi[illegible] far or near

this passage, some other craft may appear, and we be more fortunate. The relief of the rain is a sign that we are not forgotten by Divine Providence; and with such a protector we ought not to despair.

A gloomy and scanty breaking of the fast succeeded. Each person had one large mouthful of bread, which was all that prudence would authorize Mulford to distribute. He attempted a pious fraud, however, by placing his own allowance along with that of Rose's, under the impression that her strength might not endure privation as well as his own. But the tender solicitude of Rose was not to be thus deceived. Judging of his wishes and motives by her own, she at once detected the deception, and insisted on retaining no more than her proper share. When this distribution was completed, and the meagre allowance taken, only sufficient bread remained to make one more similar scanty meal, if meal a single mouthful could be termed. As for the water, a want of which would be certain to be felt as soon as the sun obtained its noonday power, the shawl was extended over it

in a way to prevent evaporation as much as possible, and at the same time to offer some resistance to the fluid's being washed from its shallow receptacle by the motion of the wreck, which was sensibly increasing with the increase of the wind and waves.

Mulford had next an anxious duty to perform. Throughout the whole of the preceding day he had seen the air escaping from the hull, in an incessant succession of small bubbles, which were formidable through their numbers, if not through their size. The mate was aware that this unceasing loss of the buoyant property of the wreck must eventually lead to their destruction, should no assistance come; and he had marked the floating line on the bottom of the vessel with his knife, ere darkness set in, on the previous evening. No sooner did his thoughts recur to this fact, after the excitement of the first hour of daylight was over, than he stepped to the different places thus marked, and saw, with an alarm that it would be difficult to describe, that the wreck had actually sunk into the water several inches within the last few hours. This was, indeed, me-

nacing their security in a most serious manner, setting a limit to their existence, which rendered all precaution on the subject of food and water useless. By the calculations of the mate, the wreck could not float more than eight-and-forty hours, should it continue to lose the air at the rate at which it had been hitherto lost. Bad as all this appeared, things were fated to become much more serious. The motion of the water quite sensibly increased, lifting the wreck at times in a way greatly to increase the danger of their situation. The reader will understand this movement did not proceed from the waves of the existing wind, but from what is technically called a ground-swell, or the long, heavy undulations that are left by the tempest that is past, or by some distant gale. The waves of the present breeze were not very formidable, the reef making a lee, though they might possibly become inconvenient from breaking on the weather side of the wreck, as soon as the drift carried the latter fairly abreast of the passage already mentioned. But the dangers that proceeded from the heavy ground-swell, which now began to give a considerable motion

to the wreck, will best explain itself by narrating the incidents as they occurred.

Harry had left his marks, and had taken his seat on the keel at Rose's side, impatiently waiting for any turn that Providence might next give to their situation, when a heavy roll of the wreck first attracted his attention to this new circumstance.

"If any one be thirsty," he observed quietly, "he or she had better drink now, while it may be done. Two or three more such rolls as this last will wash all the water from our gutters."

"Wather is a blessed thing," said Biddy, with a longing expression of the eyes; "and it would be better to swallow it than to let it be lost."

"Then drink, for heaven's sake, good woman; it may be the last occasion that will offer."

"Sure am I that I would not touch a dhrap, while the missus and Miss Rosy was a sufferin'."

"I have no thirst at all," answered Rose, sweetly, "and have already taken more water than was good for me, with so little food on my stomach."

"Eat another morsel of the bread, beloved,"

whispered Harry, in a manner so urgent, that Rose gratefully complied. "Drink, Biddy, and we will come and share with you before the water is wasted by this increasing motion."

Biddy did as desired, and each knelt in turn and took a little of the grateful fluid, leaving about a gill in the gutters for the use of those whose lips might again become parched.

"Wather is a blessed thing!" repeated Biddy, for the twentieth time; "a blessed, blessed thing is wather!"

A little scream from Mrs. Budd, which was dutifully taken up by the maid, interrupted the speech of the latter, and every eye was turned on Mulford, as if to ask an explanation of the groaning sound that had been heard within the wreck. The young mate comprehended only too well. The rolling of the wreck had lifted a portion of the open hatchway above the undulating surface of the sea, and a large quantity of the pent air within the hold had escaped in a body. The entrance of water to supply the vacuum had produced the groan. Mulford had made new marks on the vessel's bottom with his knife, and he stepped down to them

anxious and nearly heart-broken, to note the effect. That one surging of the wreck had permitted air enough to escape to lower it in the water several inches. As yet, however, the visible limits of their floating foundation had not been sufficiently reduced to attract the attention of the females, and the young man said nothing on the subject. He thought that Jack Tier was sensible of the existence of this new source of danger; but if he were, that experienced mariner imitated his own reserve, and made no allusion to it. Thus passed the day. Occasionally the wreck rolled heavily, when more air escaped, the hull settling lower and lower in the water, as a necessary consequence. The little bubbles continued incessantly to rise, and Mulford became satisfied that another day must decide their fate. Taking this view of their situation, he saw no use in reserving their food, but encouraged his companions to share the whole of what remained at sunset. Little persuasion was necessary, and when night once more came to envelope them in darkness, not a mouthful of food or a drop of water remained to meet the necessities

of the coming morn. It had rained again for a short time in the course of the afternoon, when enough water had been caught to allay their thirst; and, what was almost of as much importance to the females now, a sufficiency of sun had succeeded to dry their clothes, thus enabling them to sleep without enduring the chilling damps that might otherwise have prevented it. The wind had sensibly fallen, and the ground-swell was altogether gone; but Mulford was certain that the relief had come too late. So much air had escaped while it lasted as scarce to leave him the hope that the wreck could float until morning. The rising of the bubbles was now incessant, the crevices by which they escaped having most probably opened a little in consequence of the pressure and the unceasing action of the currents, small as the latter were.

Just as darkness was shutting in around them for the second time, Rose remarked to Mulford that it seemed to her that they had not as large a space for their little world as when they were first placed on it. The mate, however, successfully avoided an explanation;

and when the watch was again set for the night, the females lay down to seek their repose, more troubled with apprehensions for a morrow of hunger and thirst, than by any just fears that might so well have arisen from the physical certainty that the body which alone kept them from being engulfed in the sea could float but a few hours longer. This night Tier kept the look-out until Jupiter reached the zenith, when Mulford was called to hold the watch until light returned.

It may seem singular that any could sleep at all in such a situation. But we get accustomed, in an incredibly short time, to the most violent changes; and calamities that seem insupportable, when viewed from a distance, lose half their power if met and resisted with fortitude. The last may, indeed, be too significant a word to be applied to all of the party on the wreck, on the occasion of which we are writing, though no one of them all betrayed fears that were troublesome. Of Mulford it is unnecessary to speak. His deportment had been quiet, thoughtful, and full of a manly interest in the comfort of others from the first moment of

the calamity. That Rose should share the largest in his attentions, was natural enough; but he neglected no essential duty to her companions. Rose herself had little hope of being rescued. Her naturally courageous character, however, prevented any undue exhibition of despair, and now it was that the niece became the principal support of the aunt, completely changing the relations that had formerly subsisted between them. Mrs. Budd had lost all the little buoyancy of her mind. Not a syllable did she now utter concerning ships and their manœuvres. She had been, at first, a little disposed to be querulous and despairing; but the soothing and pious conversation of Rose awakened a certain degree of resolution in her, and habit soon exercised its influence over even her inactive mind. Biddy was a strange mixture of courage, despair, humility, and consideration for others. Not once had she taken her small allowance of food without first offering it, and that, too, in perfect good faith, to her "Missus and Miss Rosy;" yet her moanings for this sort of support, and her complaints of bodily suffering, much exceeded that

of all the rest of the party put together. As for Jack Tier, his conduct singularly belied his appearance. No one would have expected any great show of manly resolution from the little, rotound, lymphatic figure of Tier; but he had manifested a calmness that denoted either great natural courage, or a resolution derived from familiarity with danger. In this particular, even Mulford regarded his deportment with surprise, not unmingled with respect.

"You have had a tranquil watch, Jack," said Harry, when he was called by the person named, and had fairly aroused himself from his slumbers. "Has the wind stood as it is since sunset?"

"No change whatever, sir. It has blown a good working breeze the whole watch; and what is surprising, not as much lipper has got up as would frighten a colt on a sea beach."

"We must be near the reef, by that. I think the only currents we feel come from the tide, and they seem to be setting us back and forth, instead of carrying us in any one settled direction."

"Quite likely, sir; and this makes my opi-

nion of what I saw an hour since all the more probable."

"What you saw! In the name of a merciful Providence, Tier, do not trifle with me. Has anything been seen near by?"

"Don't talk to me of your liquors and other dhrinks," murmured Biddy in her sleep. "It's wather that's a blessed thing; and I wish I lived the night and the day by the swate pump that 's in our own yard, I do."

"The woman has been talking in her sleep, in this fashion, most of the watch" observed Jack coolly, and perhaps a little contemptuously. "But, Mr. Mulford, unless my eyes have cheated me, we are near that boat again. The passage through the reef is close aboard us here, on our larboard bow, as it might be, and the current has sucked us in it in a fashion to bring it in a sort of athwart-hawse direction to us."

"If that boat, after all, should be sent by Providence to our relief! How long is it since you saw it, Jack,"

"But a bit since, sir; or, for that matter, I think I see it now. Look hereaway, sir, just

where the dead-eyes of the fore-rigging would bear from us, if the craft stood upon her legs, as she ought to do. If that isn't a boat, it's a rock out of water."

Mulford gazed through the gloom of midnight, and saw, or fancied he saw, an object that might really be the boat. It could not be very distant either; and his mind was instantly made up as to the course he would pursue. Should it actually turn out to be that which he now so much hoped for, and its distance in the morning did not prove too great for human powers, he was resolved to swim for it at the hazard of his life. In the meantime, or until light should return, there remained nothing to do but to confide in God, soliciting his powerful succour by secret prayer.

Mulford was no sooner left alone, as it might be, by Tier's seeking a place in which to take his rest, than he again examined the state of the wreck. The young man knew that the whole wreck, under its peculiar circumstances, might sink entirely beneath the surface, and yet possess sufficient buoyancy to sustain those that were on it for a time longer, but this

involved the terrible necessity of leaving the females partly submerged themselves.

Our mate heard his own heart beat as he became satisfied of the actual condition of the wreck, and of the physical certainty that existed of its sinking, at least to the point last mentioned, ere the sun came to throw his glories over the last view that the sufferers would be permitted to take of the face of day. It appeared to him that no time was to be lost. There lay the dim and shapeless object that seemed to be the boat, distant, as he thought, about a mile. It would not have been visible at all but for the perfect smoothness of the sea, and the low position occupied by the observer. At times it did disappear altogether, when it would rise again, as if undulating in the ground-swell. This last circumstance, more than any other, persuaded Harry that it was not a rock, but some floating object that he beheld. Thus encouraged, he delayed no longer. Every moment was precious, and all might be lost by indecision. He did not like the appearance of deserting his companions, but should he fail, the motive would appear in the act. Should

he fail, every one would be soon beyond the reach of censure, and in a state of being that would do full justice to all.

Harry threw off most of his clothes, reserving only his shirt and a pair of light summer trowsers. He could not quit the wreck, however, without taking a sort of leave of Rose. On no account would he awake her, for he appreciated the agony she would feel during the period of his struggles. Kneeling at her side, he made a short prayer, then pressed his lips to her warm cheek, and left her. Rose murmured his name at that instant; but it was as the innocent and young betray their secrets in their slumbers. Neither of the party awoke.

It was a moment to prove the heart of man that in which Harry Mulford, in the darkness of midnight, alone, unsustained by any encouraging eye or approving voice, with no other aid than his own stout arm, and the unknown designs of a mysterious Providence, committed his form to the sea. There had been no sharks near the wreck all that day; but a splash in the water might bring them back again in a crowd. They were probably

prowling over the reef, near at hand. The mate used great care, therefore, to make no noise. There was the distant object, and he set it by a bright star, that wanted about an hour before it would sink beneath the horizon. That star was his beacon; and, muttering a few words in earnest prayer, the young man threw his body forward, and left the wreck, swimming lightly, but with vigour.

CHAPTER IX.

The night has been unruly; where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confused events,
New hatched to the woful time.

Macbeth.

It is seldom that man is required to make an exertion as desperate and appalling, in all its circumstances, as that on which Henry Mulford was now bent. The night was starlight, it was true, and it was possible to see objects near-by with tolerable distinctness; still, it was midnight, and the gloom of that hour rested on the face of the sea, lending its solemn mystery and obscurity to the other trying features of the undertaking. Then there was the uncertainty whether it was the boat at all, of which he was in pursuit; and, if the boat, it might drift away from him as fast as he could follow it. Nevertheless, the perfect conviction that, without some early succour, the party on the wreck, including Rose Budd, must inevitably

perish, stimulated him to proceed, and a passing feeling of doubt touching the prudence of his course, that came over the young mate when he was a few yards from the wreck, vanished under a vivid renewal of this last conviction. On he swam, therefore, riveting his eye on the "thoughtful star" that guided his course, and keeping his mind as tranquil as possible, in order that the exertions of his body might be the easier.

Mulford was an excellent swimmer. The want of food was a serious obstacle to his making one of his best efforts; but, as yet he was not very sensible of any great loss of strength. Understanding fully the necessity of swimming easily if he would swim long, he did not throw out all his energy at first, but made the movements of his limbs as regular, continued, and skilful as possible. No strength was thrown away; and his progress was in proportion to the prudence of this manner of proceeding. For some twenty minutes he held on his course in this way, when he began to experience a little of that weariness which is apt to accompany an unremitted use of the same set of mus-

cles in a monotonous and undeviating mode. Accustomed to all the resources of his art, he turned on his back, for the double purpose of relieving his arms for a minute, and of getting a glimpse of the wreck, if possible, in order to ascertain the distance he had overcome. Swim long in this manner, however, he could not with prudence, as the star was necessary in order to keep the direct line of his course. It may be necessary to explain to some of our readers that, though the surface of the ocean may be like glass, as sometimes really happens, it is never absolutely free from the long, undulating motion that is known by the name of a "ground swell." This swell, on the present occasion, was not very heavy, but it was sufficient to place our young mate at moments between two dark mounds of water, that limited his view in either direction to some eighty or a hundred yards; then it raised him on the summit of a rounded wave, that enabled him to see far as his eye could reach under that obscure light. Profiting by this advantage, Mulford now looked behind him in quest of the wreck, but uselessly. It might have been

in the trough while he was thus on the summit of the waves, or it might be that it floated so low as to be totally lost to the view of one whose head was scarcely above the surface of the water. For a single instant the young man felt a chill at his heart as he fancied that the wreck had already sunk; but it passed away when he recalled the slow progress by which the air escaped, and he saw the certainty that the catastrophe, however inevitable, could not yet have really arrived. He waited for another swell to lift him on its summit, when, by "treading water" he raised his head and shoulders fairly above the surface of the sea, and strained his eyes in another vain effort to catch a glimpse of the wreck. He could not see it. In point of fact, the mate had swam much further than he had supposed, and was already so distant as to render any such attempt hopeless. He was fully a third of a mile distant from the point of his departure.

Disappointed, and in a slight degree disheartened, Mulford turned, and swam in the direction of the sinking star. He now looked anxiously for the boat. It was time that it

came more plainly into view, and a new source of anxiety beset him, as he could discover no signs of its vicinity. Certain that he was on the course, after making a due allowance for the direction of the wind, the stout-hearted young man swam on. He next determined not to annoy himself by fruitless searches, or vain regrets, but to swim steadily for a certain time, a period long enough to carry him a material distance, ere he again looked for the object of his search.

For twenty minutes longer did that courageous and active youth struggle with the waste of waters, amid the obscurity aud solitude of midnight. He now believed himself near a mile from the wreck, and the star which had so long served him for a beacon was getting near to the horizon. He took a new observation of another of the heavenly bodies nigh it, to serve him in its stead when it should disappear altogether, and then he raised himself in the water, and looked about again for the boat. The search was in vain. No boat was very near him of a certainty, and the dreadful apprehension began to possess his mind of perishing uselessly in

that waste of gloomy waters. While thus gazing about him, turning his eyes in every quarter, hoping intently to catch some glimpse of the much-desired object in the gloom, he saw two dark, pointed objects, that resembled small stakes, in the water within twenty feet of him. Mulford knew them at a glance, and a cold shudder passed through his frame as he recognized them. They were, out of all question, the fins of an enormous shark; an animal that could not measure less than eighteen or twenty feet in length.

It is scarcely necessary to say that when our young mate discovered the proximity of this dangerous animal, situated as he was, he gave himself up for lost. He possessed his knife, however, and had heard of the manner in which even sharks were overcome, and that, too, in their own element, by the skilful and resolute. At first he was resolved to make one desperate effort for life before he submitted to a fate as horrible as that which now menaced him; but the movements of his dangerous neighbour induced him to wait. It did not approach any nearer, but continued swimming back and fro

on the surface of the water, according to the known habits of the fish, as if watching his own movements. There being no time to be wasted, our young mate turned on his face, and began again to swim in the direction of the setting star, though nearly chilled by despair. For ten minutes longer did he struggle on, beginning to feel exhaustion, however, and always accompanied by those two dark, sharp, and gliding fins. There was no difficulty in knowing the position of the animal, and Mulford's eyes were oftener on those fins than on the beacon before him. Strange as it may appear, he actually became accustomed to the vicinity of this formidable creature, and soon felt his presence a sort of relief against the dreadful solitude of his situation. He had been told by seamen, of instances, and had once witnessed a case himself, in which a shark had attended a swimming man for a long distance, either forbearing to do him harm, from repletion, or influenced by that awe which Nature has instilled into all the inferior, for the highest animal of the creation. He began to think that he was thus favoured, and really regarded the

shark as a friendly neighbour rather than as a voracious foe. In this manner did the two proceed nearly another third of a mile, the fins sometimes in sight ahead, gliding hither and thither, and sometimes out of view behind the swimmer, leaving him in dreadful doubts as to the movements of the fish, when Mulford suddenly felt something hard hit his foot. Believing it to be the shark dipping for his prey, a slight exclamation escaped him. At the next instant both feet hit the unknown substance again, and he stood erect, the water no higher than his waist! Quick, and comprehending everything connected with the sea, the young man at once understood that he was on a part of the reef where the water was so shallow as to admit of his wading.

Mulford felt that he had been providentially rescued from death. His strength had been about to fail him, when he was thus led, unknown to himself, to a spot where his life might yet be possibly prolonged for a few more hours, or days. He had leisure to look about him, and to reflect on what was next to be done. Almost unwittingly, he turned in quest

of his terrible companion, in whose voracious mouth he had actually believed himself about to be immolated a few seconds before. There the two horn-like fins still were, gliding about above the water, and indicating the smallest movement of their formidable owner. The mate observed that they went a short distance ahead of him, describing nearly a semicircle, and then returned, doing the same thing in his rear, repeating the movements incessantly, keeping always on his right. This convinced him that shoaler water existed on his left hand, and he waded in that direction until he reached a small spot of naked rock.

For a time, at least, he was safe! The fragment of coral, on which the mate now stood, was irregular in shape, but might have contained a hundred feet square in superficial measurement, and was so little raised above the level of the water as not to be visible, even by daylight, at the distance of a hundred yards. Mulford found it was perfectly dry, however; an important discovery to him, as, by a close calculation he had made of the tides since quitting the Dry Tortugas, he knew it must be

near high water. Could he have even this small portion of bare rock secure, it made him, for the moment, rich as the most extensive landholder living. A considerable quantity of seaweed had lodged on the rock, and as most of this was also quite dry, it convinced the young sailor that the place was usually bare. But, though most of this seaweed was dry, there were portions of the more recent accessions there that still lay in, or quite near to the water, which formed exceptions. In handling these weeds, in order to ascertain the facts, Mulford caught a small shell-fish, and, finding it fresh, and easy to open, he swallowed it with the eagerness of a famishing man. Never had food proved half so grateful to him as that single swallow of a very palatable testaceous animal. By feeling further, he found several others of the same family, and made quite as large a meal as, under the circumstances, was probably good for him. Then, grateful for his escape, but overcome by fatigue, he hastily arranged a bed of seaweed, drew a portion of the plant over his body, to keep him warm, and fell into a deep sleep, that lasted for hours.

Mulford did not regain his consciousness until the rays of the rising sun fell upon his eyelids, and the genial warmth of the great luminary shed its benign influence over his frame. At first his mind was confused, and it required a few seconds to bring a perfect recollection of the past, and a true understanding of his real situation. They came, however, and the young man moved to the highest part of his little domain, and cast an anxious, hurried look around in quest of the wreck. A knowledge of the course in which he had swam, aided by the position of the sun, told him on what part of the naked waste to look for the object he sought. God had not yet forsaken them! There was the wreck; or, it might be more exact to say, there were those whom the remaining buoyancy of the wreck still upheld from sinking into the depths of the Gulf. In point of fact, but a very little of the bottom of the vessel actually remained above water, some two or three yards square at most, and that little was what seamen term nearly awash. Two or three hours must bury that small portion of the still naked wood beneath the

surface of the sea, though sufficient buoyancy might possibly remain for the entire day still to keep the living from death.

There the wreck was, however, yet floating; and, though not visible to Mulford, with a small portion of it above water. He saw the four persons only; and, what was more, they saw him. This was evident by Jack Tier's waving his hat like a man cheering. When Mulford returned this signal, the shawl of Rose was tossed into the air, in a way to leave no doubt that he was seen and known. The explanation of this early recognition and discovery of the young mate was very simple. Tier was not asleep when Harry left the wreck, though, seeing the importance of the step the other was taking, he had feigned to be so. When Rose awoke, missed her lover, and was told what had happened, her heart was kept from sinking by his encouraging tale and hopes. An hour of agony had succeeded, nevertheless, when light returned, and no Mulford was to be seen. the despair that burst upon the heart of our heroine was followed by the joy of discovering him on the rock.

It is scarcely necessary to say how much the parties were relieved on ascertaining their respective positions. Faint as were the hopes of each of eventual delivery, the two or three minutes that succeeded seemed to be minutes of perfect happiness. After this rush of unlooked-for joy, Mulford continued his intelligent examination of surrounding objects.

The wreck was fully half a mile from the rock of the mate, but much nearer to the reef than it had been the previous night. "Could it but ground on the rocks," thought the young man, "it would be a most blessed event." The thing was possible, though the first half hour of his observations told him that its drift was in the direction of the open passage so often named, rather than toward the nearest rocks. Still, that drift brought Rose each minute nearer and nearer to himself again. In looking round, however, the young man saw the boat. It was a quarter of a mile distant, with open water between them, apparently grounded on a rock, for it was more within the reef than he was himself. He must have passed it in the dark, and the boat had been

left to obey the wind and currents, and to drift to the spot where it then lay.

Mulford shouted aloud when he saw the boat, and at once determined to swim in quest of it, as soon as he had collected a little refreshment from among the sea-weed. On taking a look at his rock by daylight, he saw that its size was quadrupled to the eye by the falling of the tide, and that water was lying in several of the cavities of its uneven surface. At first he supposed this to be sea-water, left by the flood; but, reflecting a moment, he remembered the rain, and hoped it might be possible that one little cavity, containing two or three gallons of the fluid, would turn out to be fresh. Kneeling beside it, he applied his lips in feverish haste, and drank the sweetest draught that had ever passed his lips. Slaking his thirst, which had begun again to be painfully severe, he arose with a heart overflowing with gratitude—could he only get Rose to that narrow and barren rock, it would seem to be an earthly paradise. Mulford next made his scanty, but all things considered, sufficient meal, drank moderately afterward, and then

turned his attention and energies toward the boat, which, though now aground and fast, might soon float on the rising tide, and drift once more beyond his reach. It was his first intention to swim directly for his object, but, just as about to enter the water, he saw with horror the fins of at least a dozen sharks, who were prowling about in the deeper water of the reef, and almost encircling his hold. To throw himself in the midst of such enemies would be madness, and he stopped to reflect, and again to look about him. For the first time that morning, he took a survey of the entire horizon, to see if anything were in sight; for, hitherto, his thoughts had been too much occupied with Rose and her companions, to remember anything else. To the northward and westward he distinctly saw the upper sails of a large ship, that was standing on a wind to the northward and eastward. As there was no port to which a vessel of that character would be likely to be bound in the quarter of the Gulf to which such a course would lead, Mulford at once inferred it was the sloop-of-war, which, after having examined the islets at the Dry Tortugas, and

finding them deserted, was beating, either to go into Key West, or to pass to the southward of the reef again, by the passage through which she had come as lately as the previous day. This was highly encouraging; and could he only get to the boat, and remove the party from the wreck before it sunk, there was now every prospect of a final escape.

To the southward, also, the mate fancied he saw a sail. It was probably a much smaller vessel than the ship in the north-west, and at a greater distance. It might, however, be the lofty sails of some large craft, standing along the reef, going westward, bound to New Orleans, or to that new and important port, Point Isabel; or it might be some wrecker, or other craft, edging away into the passage. As it was, it appeared only as a speck in the horizon, and was too far off to offer much prospect of succour.

Thus acquainted with the state of things around him, Mulford gave his attention seriously to his duties. He was chiefly afraid that the returning tide might lift the boat from the rock on which it had grounded, and that it

would float beyond his reach. Then there was the frightful and ever-increasing peril of the wreck, and the dreadful fate that so inevitably menaced those it held, were not relief prompt. This thought goaded him nearly to desperation, and he felt at moments almost ready to plunge into the midst of the sharks, and fight his way to his object.

But reflection shewed him a less hazardous way of making an effort to reach the boat. The sharks' fins described a semicircle only, as had been the case of his single attendant during the night, and he thought that the shallowness of the water prevented their going further than they did, in a south-easterly direction, which was that of the boat. He well knew that a shark required sufficient water to sink beneath its prey, ere it made its swoop, and that it uniformly turned on its back, and struck upward whenever it gave one of its voracious bites. This was owing to the greater length of its upper than of its lower jaw, and Mulford had heard it was a physical necessity of its formation. Right or wrong, he determined to act on this theory, and began at once to wade

along the part of the reef that his enemies seemed unwilling to approach.

Had our young mate a weapon of any sort larger than his knife, he would have felt greater confidence in his success. As it was, however, he drew that knife, and was prepared to sell his life dearly should a foe assail him. No sooner was his step heard in the water, than the whole group of sharks were set in violent motion, glancing past, and frequently quite near him, as if aware their intended prey was about to escape. Had the water deepened much, Harry would have returned at once, for a conflict with such numbers would have been hopeless; but it did not; on the contrary, it shoaled again, after a very short distance at which it had been waist-deep; and Mulford found himself wading over a long, broad surface of rock, and that directly toward the boat, through water that seldom rose above his knees, and which, occasionally, scarcely covered his feet. There was no absolutely naked rock near him, but there seemed to be acres of that which might be almost said to be awash. Amid the greedy throng that endeavoured to accompany

him, the mate even fancied he recognised the enormous fins of his old companion, who sailed to and fro in the crowd in a stately manner, as if merely a curious looker on of his own movements. It was the smaller, and probably the younger sharks, that betrayed the greatest hardihood and voracity. One or two of these made fierce swoops towards Harry, as if bent on having him at every hazard; but they invariably glided off when they found their customary mode of attack resisted by the shoalness of the water.

Our young mate got ahead but slowly, being obliged to pay a cautious attention to the movements of his escort. Sometimes he was compelled to wade up to his arms in order to cross narrow places, that he might get on portions of the rock that were nearly bare; and once he was actually compelled to swim eight or ten yards. Nevertheless, he did get on, and after an hour of this sort of work, he found himself within a hundred yards of the boat, which lay grounded near a low piece of naked rock, but separated from it by a channel of deep water, into which all the sharks rushed in

a body, as if expressly to cut off his escape. Mulford now paused to take breath, and to consider what ought to be done. On the spot where he stood he was quite safe, though ankle deep in the sea, the shallow water extending to a considerable distance on all sides of him, with the single exception of the channel in his front. He stood on the very verge of that channel, and could see in the pellucid element before him, that it was deep enough to float a vessel of some size.

To venture into the midst of twenty sharks required desperation, and Harry was not yet reduced to that. He had been so busy in making his way to the point where he stood as to have no leisure to look for the wreck; but he now turned his eyes in quest of that all interesting object. He saw the shawl fluttering in the breeze, and that was all he could see. Tier had contrived to keep it flying as a signal where he was to be found, but the hull of the schooner had sunk so low in the water that they who were seated on its keel were not visible even at the short distance which now separated them from Mulford. Encouraged by

this signal, and animated by the revived hope of still saving his companions, Harry turned toward the channel, half inclined to face every danger rather than to wait any longer. At that moment the fins were all gliding along the channel from him, and in the same direction. Some object drew the sharks away in a body, and the young mate let himself easily into the water, and swam as noiselessly as he could towards the boat.

It was a fearful trial, but Mulford felt that everything depended on his success. Stimulated by his motive, and strengthened by the food and water taken an hour before, never had he shown so much skill and power in the water. In an incredibly short period he was half way across the channel, still swimming strong and unharmed. A few strokes more sent him so near the boat that hope took full possession of his soul, and he shouted in exultation. That indiscreet but natural cry, uttered so near the surface of the sea, turned every shark upon him, as the pack springs at the fox in view. Mulford was conscious of the folly of his cry the instant it escaped him, and involuntarily

he turned his head to note the effect on his enemies. Every fin was gliding towards him, —a dark array of swift and furious foes. Ten thousand bayonets, levelled in their line, could not have been one half as terrible, and the efforts of the young man became nearly frantic. But strong as he was, and ready in the element, what is the movement of a man in the water compared to that of a vigorous and voracious fish? Mulford could see those fins coming on like a tempest, and he had just given up all hope, and was feeling his flesh creep with terror, when his foot hit the rock. Giving himself an onward plunge, he threw his body upward toward the boat, and into so much shoaler water, at least a dozen feet by that single effort. Recovering his legs as soon as possible, he turned to look behind him. The water seemed alive with fins, each pair gliding back and forth, as the bull-dog bounds in front of the ox's muzzle. Just then a light-coloured object glanced past the young man, so near as almost to touch him. It was a shark that had actually turned on its back to seize its prey, and was only prevented from succeeding by being driven

from the line of its course by hitting the slimy rock, over which it was compelled to make its plunge. The momentum with which it came on, added to the inclination of the rock, forced the head and half of the body of this terrible assailant into the air, giving the intended victim an opportunity of seeing from what a fate he had escaped. Mulford avoided this fish without much trouble, however, and the next instant he threw himself into the boat, on the bottom of which he lay panting with the violence of his exertions, and unable to move under the reaction which now came over his system.

The mate lay in the bottom of the boat, exhausted and unable to rise for several minutes; during that space he devoutly returned thanks to God for his escape, and bethought him of the course he was next to pursue, in order to effect the rescue of his companions. The boat was larger than common. It was also well equipped,—a mast and sail lying along with the oars, on it thwarts. The rock placed Harry to windward of the wreck, and by the time he felt sufficiently revived to rise and look about him, his plan of proceeding was fully arranged in his

own mind. Among other things that he saw, as he still lay in the bottom of the boat, was a breaker, which he knew contained fresh water, and a bread-bag. These were provisions which it was customary for the men to make, when employed on boat duty; and the articles had been left where he now saw them, in the hurry of the movements, as the brig quitted the islets.

Harry rose the instant he felt his strength returning. Striking the breaker with his foot, and feeling the basket with a hand, he ascertained that the one held its water, and the other its bread. This was immense relief, for by this time the sufferings of the party on the wreck must be returning with redoubled force. The mate then stepped the mast, and fitted the sprit to the sail, knowing that the latter would be seen fluttering in the wind by those on the wreck, and carry joy to their hearts. After this considerate act, he began to examine into the position of the boat. It was still aground, having been left by the tide, but the water had already risen several inches, and by placing himself on a gunwale, so as to bring the boat on its bilge, and pushing with an oar, he soon

got it into deep water. It only remained to haul aft the sheet, and right the helm, to be standing through the channel, at a rate that promised a speedy deliverance to his friends and most of all to Rose.

Mulford glanced past the rocks and shoals, attended by the whole company of the sharks. They moved before, behind, and on each side of him, as if unwilling to abandon their prey, even after he had got beyond the limits of their power to do him harm. It was not an easy thing to manage the boat in that narrow and crooked channel, with no other guide for the courses than the eye, and it required so much of the mate's vigilance to keep clear of the sharp angles of the rocks, that he could not once cast his eyes aside, to look for the fluttering shawl which now composed the standing signal of the wreck. At length the boat shot through the last passage of the reef, and issued into open water. Mulford knew that he must come out a half a mile at least to leeward of this object, and, without even raising his head, he flattened in the sheet, put his helm down, and luffed close to the wind. Then, and then only, did he venture to look around him.

Our mate felt his heart leap toward his mouth, as he observed the present state of the wreck. It was dead to windward of him, in the first place, and it seemed to be entirely submerged. He saw the shawl fluttering as before; for Tier had fastened one corner to a button-hole of his own jacket, and another to the dress of Biddy, leaving the part which might be called the fly, to rise at moments almost perpendicularly in the air, in a way to render it visible at some distance. He saw also the heads and the bodies of those on the schooner's bottom, but to him they appeared to be standing in, or on, the water. The distance may have contributed a little to this appearance, but no doubt remained that so much air had escaped from the hold of the vessel as to permit it to sink altogether beneath the surface of the sea. It was time, indeed, to proceed to the relief of the sufferers.

Notwithstanding the boat sailed particularly fast, and worked beautifully, it could not equal the impatience of Mulford to get on. Passing away to the north-east a sufficient distance, as he thought, to weather on the wreck, the young

man tacked at last, and had the happiness to see that every foot he proceeded was now in a direct line towards Rose. It was only while tacking he perceived that all the fins had disappeared. He felt no doubt that they had deserted him, in order to push for the wreck, which offered a so much larger, and a so much more attainable prey. This increased his feverish desire to get on, the boat seeming to drag, in his eyes, at the very moment it was leaving a wake full of eddies and little whirlpools. The wind was steady, but it seemed to Mulford that the boat was set to leeward of her course by a current, though this could hardly have been the case, as the wreck, the sole mark of his progress, would have had at least as great a drift as the boat. At length Mulford—to him it appeared to be an age, in truth it was after a run of about twenty minutes—came near the goal he so earnestly sought, and got an accurate view of the state of the wreck, and of those on it. The hull of the schooner had, in truth, sunk entirely beneath the surface of the sea, and the party it sustained stood already knee-deep in the water. This

was sufficiently appalling, but the presence of the sharks, who were crowding around the spot, rendered the whole scene frightful. To the young mate it seemed as if he must still be too late to save Rose from a fate more terrible than drowning, for his boat fell so far to leeward as to compel him to tack once more. As he swept past the wreck, he called out to encourage his friends, begging them to be of good heart for five minutes longer, when he should be able to reach them. Rose held out her arms entreatingly, and the screams of Mrs. Budd and Biddy, which were extorted by the closer and closer approach of the sharks, proclaimed the imminency of the danger they ran, and the importance of not losing a moment of time.

Mulford took his distance with a seaman's eye, and the boat went about like a top. The latter fell off, and the sail filled on the other tack. Then the young mariner saw, with a joy no description can pourtray, that he looked to windward of the fluttering shawl, toward which his little craft was already flying. He afterwards believed that shawl alone prevented the voracious party of fish from assailing those on

the wreck, for, though there might not yet be sufficient depth of water to allow of their customary mode of attack, creatures of their voracity did not always wait for such conveniences. But the boat was soon in the midst of the fins, scattering them in all directions, and Mulford let go his sheet, put his helm down, and sprang forward to catch the extended arms of Rose.

It might have been accident, or it might have been the result of skill and interest in our heroine, but certain it is, that the bows of the boat came on the wreck precisely at the place where Rose stood, and her hand was the first object that the young man touched.

"Take my aunt first," cried Rose, resisting Mulford's efforts to lift her into the boat; "she is dreadfully alarmed, and can stand with difficulty."

Although two of Rose's activity and lightness might have been drawn into the boat, while the process was going on in behalf of the widow, Mulford lost no time in discussion, but did as he was desired. First directing Tier to hold on to the painter, he applied his strength to the

arms of Mrs. Budd, and assisted by Rose and Biddy, got her safely into the boat, over its bows. Rose now waited not for assistance, but followed her aunt with a haste that proved fear lent her strength in despite her long fast. Biddy came next, though clumsily, and not without trouble, and Jack followed the instant he was permitted so to do. Of course, the boat, no longer held by its painter, drifted away from the spot, and the hull of the schooner, relieved from the weight of four human beings, rose so near the surface again as to bring a small line of its keel out of water. No better evidence could have been given of the trifling power which sustained it, and of the timely nature of the succour brought by Mulford. Had the boat remained near the schooner, it would have been found half an hour later that the hull had sunk slowly out of sight, finding its way, doubtless, inch by inch towards the bottom of the gulf.

By this time the sun was well up, and the warmth of the hour, season, and latitude, was shed on the sufferers. There was an old sail in the boat, and in this the party dried their limbs

and feet, which were getting to be numb by their long immersion. Then the mate produced the bag, and opened it in quest of bread. A small portion was given to each, and, on looking farther, the mate discovered a piece of boiled ship's beef had been secreted in this receptacle. Of this also he gave each a moderate slice, taking a larger portion for himself, as requiring less precaution. The suffering of the party from hunger was far less than that they endured from thirst. Neither had been endured long enough seriously to enfeeble them, or to render a full meal very dangerous, but the thirst had been much the hardest to be borne. Of this fact Biddy soon gave audible evidence.

"The mate is good," she said, "and the bread tastes swate and refreshing; but wather is a blessed thing. Can you no give us one dhrap of the wather that falls from heaven, Mr. Mulford; for this wather of the sea is of no use but to drown Christians in?"

In an instant the mate had opened a breaker, and filled the tin-pot which is almost always to be found in a boat. Biddy said no more; but her eyes pleaded so eloquently, that Rose beg-

ged the faithful creature might have the first drink. One eager swallow went down, and then a cry of disappointment succeeded. The water was salt, and had been put in the breaker for ballast. The other breaker was tried with the same success.

"It is terrible to be without one drop of water," murmured Rose, "and this food makes it more necessary than ever."

"Patience, patience, dearest Rose—patience for ten minutes, and you shall all drink," answered the mate, filling the sail, and keeping the boat away while speaking. "There is water, God be praised! on the rock to which I first swam, and we will secure it before another day's sun help to make it evaporate."

This announcement quieted the longings of those who endured a thirst which disappointment rendered doubly hard to bear; and away the boat glided toward the rock. As he now flew over the distance, lessened more than one-half by the drift of the wreck, Mulford recalled the scene through which he had so painfully passed the previous night. As often happens, he shuddered at the recollection of things

which, at the moment, a desperate resolution had enabled him to encounter with firmness. Still, he thought nothing less than the ardent desire to save Rose could have carried him through the trial with the success which attended his struggles. The dear being at his side asked a few explanations of what had passed; and she bowed her head and wept, equally with pain and delight, as imagination pictured to her the situation of her betrothed amid that waste of water, with his fearful companions, and all in the hours of deep night.

But that was over now. There was the rock—the blessed rock on which Mulford had so accidently struck, close before them,—and presently they were all on it. The mate took the pot, and ran to the little reservoir, returning with a sweet draught for each of the party.

"A blessed, blessed thing, is wather!" exclaimed Biddy, this time finding the relief she sought, "and a thousand blessings on *you*, Mr. Mulford, who have niver done us anything but good."

Rose looked a still higher eulogy on the young man, and even Mrs. Budd had something

commendatory and grateful to say. Jack Tier was silent, but he had all his eyes about him, as he now proved.

"We 've all on us been so much taken up with our own affairs," remarked the steward's assistant, "that we 've taken but little notice of the neighbourhood. If that is n't the brig, Mr. Mulford, running through this very passage, with stun'sails set alow and aloft, I don't know the Molly Swash when I see her!"

"The brig!" exclaimed the mate, recollecting the vessels he had seen at the break of day, for the first time in hours. "Can it be possible that the craft I made out to the southward is the brig?"

"Look, and judge for yourself, sir. There she comes, like a racehorse; and if she holds her present course, she must pass somewhere within a mile or so of us, if we stay where we are."

Mulford did look, as did all with him. There was the Swash, sure enough, coming down before the wind, and under a cloud of canvas. She might be still a league, or a league and a half distant, but, at the rate at

which she was travelling, that distance would soon be past. She was running through the passage, no doubt, with a view to proceed to the Dry Tortugas to look after the schooner, Spike having the hope that he had dodged his pursuers on the coast of Cuba. The mate now looked for the ship in the north-western board, believing, as he did, that she was the sloop-of-war. That vessel had gone about, and was standing to the southward, on a taut bowline. She was still a long way off, three or four leagues at least, but the change she had made in her position since last seen proved that she was a great sailer. Then she was more than hull down; whereas now she was near enough to let the outline of a long, straight fabric be discovered beneath her canvas.

"It is hardly possible that Spike should not see the vessel here in the northern board," Mulford observed to Tier, who had been examining the ship with him. "The lookout is usually good on board the Swash, and, just now, should certainly be as good as common. Spike is no dawdler with serious business before him."

"He's a willian!" muttered Jack Tier.

The mate regarded his companion with some surprise. Jack was a very insignificant-looking personage in common, and one would scarcely pause to give him a second look, unless it might be to laugh at his rotundity and little waddling legs. But now the mate fancied he was swelling with feelings that actually imparted somewhat more than usual stature and dignity to his appearance. His face was full of indignation, and there was something about the eye that to Mulford was inexplicable. As Rose, however, had related to him the scene that took place on the islet at the moment when Spike was departing, the mate supposed that Jack still felt a portion of the resentment that such a collision would be apt to create. From the expression of Jack's countenance at that instant, it struck him that Spike might not be exactly safe should accident put it in the power of the former to do him an injury.

It was now necessary to decide on the course that ought to be pursued. The bag contained sufficient food to last the party several days, and a gallon of water still re-

mained in the cavity of the rock. This last was collected, and put in one of the breakers, which was emptied of the salt water in order to receive it. As water, however, was the great necessity in that latitude, Mulford did not deem it prudent to set sail with so small a supply, and he accordingly commenced a search on some of the adjacent rocks, Jack Tier accompanying him. They succeeded in doubling their stock of water, and found several shell-fish, that the females found exceedingly grateful and refreshing. On the score of hunger and thirst, indeed, no one was now suffering. By judiciously sipping a little water at a time, and retaining it in the mouth before swallowing, the latter painful feeling had been gotten rid of; and, as for food, there was even more than was actually needed, and that of a very good quality. It is probable that standing in the water for hours, as Rose, and her aunt, and Biddy, had been obliged to do, had contributed to lessen the pain endured from thirst, though they had all suffered a good deal from that cause, especially while the sun shone.

Mulford and Tier were half an hour in ob-

taining the water. By the end of that period the brigantine was so near as to render her hull distinctly visible. It was high time to decide on their future course. The sail had been brailed when the boat reached the rock, and the boat itself lay on the side of the latter opposite to the brig, and where no part of it could be seen by those on board the Swash, with the exception of the mast. Under the circumstances, therefore, Mulford thought it wisest to remain where they were, and let the vessel pass, before they attempted to proceed toward Key West, their intended place of refuge. In order to do this, however, it was necessary to cause the whole party to lie down in such a way as to be hid by the inequalities in the rock, as it was now very evident the brig would pass within half a mile of them. Hitherto it was not probable that they had been seen, and, by using due caution, the chance of Spike's overlooking them altogether amounted nearly to certainty.

The necessary arrangements were soon made, the boat's masts unstepped, the party placed behind their covers, and the females comfort-

ably bestowed in a spare sail, where they might get a little undisturbed sleep after the dreadful night or morning they had passed. Even Jack Tier lay down to catch his nap, as the most useful manner of bestowing himself for a couple of hours; the time Mulford had mentioned as the period of their stay where they were.

As for the mate, vigilance was his portion, and he took his position, hid like all the rest, where he could watch the movements of his old craft. In about twenty minutes the brig was quite near; so near that Mulford not only saw the people on board her, who showed themselves in the rigging, but fancied he could recognize their persons. As yet nothing had occurred in the way of change; but, just as the Swash got abreast of the rock she began to take in her studding-sails, and that hurriedly, as is apt to occur on board a vessel in sudden emergencies. Our young man was a little alarmed at first, believing that they might have been discovered; but he was soon induced to think that the crew of the brigantine had just then begun to suspect the character of the ship to the northward. That vessel had been drawing

near all this time, and was now only some three leagues distant. Owing to the manner in which she headed, or bows on, it was not a very easy matter to tell the character of this stranger, though the symmetry and squareness of his yards rendered it nearly certain he was a cruiser. Though Spike could not expect to meet his old acquaintance here, after the chase he had so lately led her down on the opposite coast, he might and would have his misgivings, and Mulford thought it was his intention to haul up close round the northern angle of the reef, and maintain his advantage of the wind over the stranger. If this were actually done it might expose the boat to view, for the brig would pass within a quarter of a mile of it, and on the side of the rock on which it lay. It was too late, however, to attempt a change, since the appearance of human beings in such a place would be certain to draw the brig's glasses on them, and the glasses must at once let Spike know who they were. It remained, therefore, only to await the result as patiently as possible.

A very few minutes removed all doubt. The brig hauled as close round the reef as she dared

to venture, and in a very short time the boat lay exposed to view to all on board her. The vessel was now so near that Mulford plainly saw the boatswain get upon the coach-house, or little hurricane-house deck, where Spike stood examining the ship with his glass, and point out the boat where it lay at the side of the rock. In an instant the glass was levelled at the spot, and the movements on board the brig immediately betrayed to Mulford that the boat was recognized. Sail was shortened on board the Swash, and men were seen preparing to lower her stern boat, while everything indicated that the vessel was about to be hove-to. There was no time now to be lost, but the young man immediately gave the alarm.

No sooner did the party arise and shew themselves than the crew of the Swash gave three cheers. By the aid of the glass, Spike doubtless recognized their persons, and the fact was announced to the men, by way of stimulating their exertions. This gave an additional spur to the movements of those on the rock, who hastened into their own boat, and made sail as soon as possible.

It was far easier to do all that has been described than to determine on the future course. Capture was certain if the fugitives ventured into the open water, and their only hope was to remain on the reef. If channels for the passage of the boat could be found, escape was highly probable, as the schooner's boat could sail much faster than the brig's boat could row, fast as Mulford knew the last to be. But the experience of the morning had told the mate that the rock rose too near the surface in many places for the boat, small as it was, to pass over it; and he must trust a great deal to chance. Away he went, however, standing along a narrow channel, through which the wind just permitted him to lay, with the sail occasionally shaking.

By this time the Swash had her boat in the water, manned with four powerful oars, Spike steering it in his own person. Our young mate placed Tier in the bows to point out the deepest water, and kept his sail a rap full, in order to get ahead as fast as possible. Ahead he did get, but it was on a course that soon brought him out in the open water of the main

passage through the reef, leaving Spike materially astern. The latter now rose in his boat, and made a signal with his hat, which the boatswain perfectly understood. The latter caused the brig to wear short round on her heel, and boarded his foretack in chase, hauling up in the passage as soon as he could again round the reef. Mulford soon saw that it would never do for him to venture far from the rocks, the brig going two feet to his one, though not looking quite as high as he did in the boat. But the Swash had her guns, and it was probable they would be used, rather than he should escape. When distant two hundred yards from the reef, therefore, he tacked. The new course brought the fugitives nearly at right angles to that steered by Spike, who stood directly on, as if conscious that, sooner or later, such a rencontre must occur. It would seem that the tide was setting through the passage, for when the boat of Mulford again reached the reef, it was considerably to windward of the channel out of which she had issued, and opposite to another which offered very opportunely for her entrance. Into this

new channel, then, the mate somewhat blindly ran, feeling the necessity of getting out of gun-shot of the brig at every hazard. She at least could not follow him among the rocks, let Spike in his boat proceed as he might.

According to appearances, Spike was not likely to be very successful. He was obliged to diverge from his course, in order to get into the main passage at the very point where Mulford had just before done the same thing, and pull along the reef to windward, in order to get into the new channel, into which the boat he was pursuing had just entered. This brought him not only astern again, but a long bit astern, inasmuch as he was compelled to make the circuit described. On he went, however, as eager in the chase as the hound with his game in view.

Mulford's boat seemed to fly, and glided ahead at least three feet to that of Spike's two. The direction of the channel it was in brought it pretty close to the wind, but the water was quite smooth, and our mate managed to keep the sail full, and his little craft at the same time quite near the weatherly side of the rocks.

In the course of ten minutes the fugitives were fully a mile from the brig, which was unable to follow them, but kept standing off and on, in the main passage, waiting the result. At one time Mulford thought the channel would bring him out into open water again, on the northern side of the reef, and more than a mile to the eastward of the point where the ship-channel in which the Swash was plying commenced; but an accidental circumstance prevented his standing in far enough to ascertain the fact. That circumstance was as follows.

In running a mile and a half over the reef, in the manner described, Mulford had left the boat of Spike quite half a mile astern. He was now out of gun-shot from the brig, or at least beyond the range of her grape, the only missile he feared, and so far to windward that he kept his eye on every opening to the southward, which he fancied might allow of his making a stretch deeper into the mazes of the reef, among which he believed it easiest for him to escape, and to weary the oarsmen of his pursuers. Two or three of these openings offered as he glided along, but it struck him that they

all looked so high that the boat would not lay through them—an opinion in which he was right. At length he came abreast of one that seemed straight and clear of obstacles as far as he could see, and through which he might run with a flowing sheet. Down went his helm, and about went his boat, running away to the southward as fast as ever.

Had Spike followed, doubled the same shoal, and kept away again in the same channel as had been done by the boat he chased, all his hopes of success must have vanished at once. This he did not attempt, therefore; but, sheering into one of the openings which the mate had rejected, he cut off quite half a mile in his distance. This was easy enough for him to accomplish, as a row-boat would pull even easier, near to the wind, than with the wind broad on its bow. In consequence of this short cut, therefore, Spike was actually crossing out into Mulford's new channel, just as the latter had handsomely cleared the mouth of the opening through which he effected his purpose.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the two

boats must have been for a few minutes quite near to each other; so near, indeed, did the fugitives now pass to their pursuers, that it would have been easy for them to have conversed, had they been so disposed. Not a word was spoken, however, but Mulford went by, leaving Spike about a hundred yards astern. This was a trying moment to the latter, and devil tempted him to seek his revenge. He had not come unarmed on his enterprise, but three or four loaded muskets lay in the stern-sheets of his yawl. He looked at his men, and saw that they could not hold out much longer to pull as they had been pulling. Then he looked at Mulford's boat, and saw it gliding away from him at a rate that would shortly place it another half mile in advance. He seized a musket, and raised it to his shoulder, nay, was in the act of taking aim at his mate, when Rose, who watched his movements, threw herself before Harry, and if she did not actually save his life, at least prevented Spike's attempt on it for that occasion. In the course of the next ten minutes the fugitives had again so far gained on their pursuers, that the latter began

to see that their efforts were useless. Spike muttered a few bitter curses, and told his men to lay on their oars.

"It's well for the runaway," he added, "that the gal put herself between us, else would his grog have been stopped for ever. I've long suspected this; but had I been sure of it, the gulf stream would have had the keeping of his body, the first dark night we were in it together. Lay on your oars, men, lay on your oars; I'm afeard the villian will get through our fingers, a'ter all."

The men obeyed, and then, for the first time, did they turn their heads, to look at those they had been so vehemently pursuing. The other boat was quite half a mile from them, and it had again tacked. This last occurrence induced Spike to pull slowly ahead, in quest of another short passage to cut the fugitives off; but no such opening offered.

"There he goes about again, by George!" exclaimed Spike. "Give way, lads—give way, an easy stroke; for if he is embayed, he can't escape us!"

Sure enough, poor Mulford *was* embayed,

and could see no outlet by which to pass ahead. He tacked his boat two or three times, and he wore round as often; but on every side shoals or rocks, that actually rose above the surface of the water, impeded his course. The fact was not to be concealed; after all his efforts, and so many promises of success, not only was his further progress ahead cut off, but equally so was retreat. The passage was not wide enough to admit the hope of getting by his pursuers, and the young man came to the conclusion that his better course was to submit with dignity to his fate. For himself he had no hope—he knew Spike's character too well for that; but he did not apprehend any great immediate danger to his companions. Spike had a coarse brutal admiration for Rose; but her expected fortune, which was believed to be of more amount than was actually the case, was a sort of pledge that he would not willingly put himself in a situation that would prevent the possibility of enjoying it. Strange, hurried, and somewhat confused thoughts passed through Harry Mulford's mind as he brailed his sail, and waited for his captors to approach

and take possession of his boat and himself. This was done quietly, and with very few words on the part of Spike.

Mulford would have liked the appearance of things better had his old commander cursed him, and betrayed other signs of the fury that was boiling in his very soul. On the contrary, never had Stephen Spike seemed more calm, or under better self-command. He smiled and saluted Mrs. Budd, just as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, and alluded to the sharpness of the chase with facetiousness and seeming good humour. The females were deceived by this manner, and hoped, after all, that the worst that would happen would be a return to their old position on board the Swash. This was being so much better off than their horrible situation on the wreck, that the change was not frightful to them.

"What has become of the schooner, Mr. Mulford?" asked Spike, as the boats began to pass down the channel to return to the brig—two of the Swash's men taking their seats in that which had been captured, along with their commander, while the other two got a tow

from the use of the sail. "I see you have the boat here that we used alongside of her, and suppose you know something of the craft itself."

"She capsized with us in a squall," answered the mate, "and we only left the wreck this morning."

"Capsized!—hum—that was a hard fate, to be sure, and denotes bad seamanship. Now, I've sailed in all sorts of craft these forty years, or five-and-thirty at least, and never capsized anything in my life. Stand by there for'ard, to hold on by that rock."

A solitary cap of the coral rose above the water two or three feet, close to the channel, and was the rock to which Spike alluded. It was only some fifty feet in diameter, and of an oval form, rising quite above the ordinary tides, as was apparent by its appearance. It is scarcely necessary to say it had no other fresh water than that which occasionally fell on its surface, which surface being quite smooth, retained very little of the rain it received. The boat was soon alongside of this rock, where it was held broadside-to by the two seamen.

"Mr. Mulford, do me the favour to step up here," said Spike, leading the way on to the rock himself. "I have a word to say to you before we get on board the old Molly once more."

Mulford silently complied, fully expecting that Spike intended to blow his brains out, and willing the bloody deed should be done in a way to be as little shocking to Rose as circumstances would allow. But Spike manifested no such intention. A more refined cruelty was uppermost in his mind; and his revenge was calculated, and took care to fortify itself with some of the quibbles and artifices of the law. He might not be exactly right in his legal reservations, but he did not the less rely on their virtue.

"Hark'e, Mr. Mulford," said Spike, sharply, as soon as both were on the rock, "you have run from my brig, thereby shewing your distaste for her; and I've no disposition to keep a man who wishes to quit me. Here you are, sir, on *terrum firm*, as the scholars call it; and here you have my full permission to remain. I wish you a good morning, sir; and will not fail to

report, when we get in, that you left the brig of your own pleasure."

"You will not have the cruelty to abandon me on this naked rock, Captain Spike, and that without a morsel of food or a drop of water."

"Wather is a blessed thing," exclaimed Biddy. "Do not think of lavin' the gentleman widout wather."

"You left *me*, sir, without food or water, and you can fit out your own rock; yes, d—e, sir, you left me *under fire*, and that is a thing no true-hearted man would have thought of. Stand by to make sail, boys, and if he offer to enter the boat, pitch him out with the boat-hooks."

Spike was getting angry, and he entered the boat again, without perceiving that Rose had left it. Light of foot and resolute of spirit, the beautiful girl, handsomer than ever perhaps by her excited feelings and dishevelled hair, had sprung on the rock, as Spike stepped into the boat forward; and when the latter turned round, after loosening the sail, he was drifting away from the very being who was the object of all

his efforts. Mulford, believing that Rose was to be abandoned as well as himself, received the noble girl in his arms, though ready to implore Spike, on his knees, to return and at least to take her off. But Spike wanted no solicitation on that point. He returned of his own accord, and had just reached the rock again, when the report of a gun drew all eyes towards the brig.

The Swash had again run out of the passage, and was beating up, close to the reef as she dared to go, with a signal flying. All the seamen at once understood the cause of this hint. The strange sail was getting too near, and everybody could see that it was the sloop-of-war. Spike looked at Rose, a moment, in doubt. But Mulford raised his beloved in his arms, and carried her to the side of the rock, stepping on board the boat.

Spike watched the movements of the young man with jealous vigilance. and no sooner was Rose placed on her seat, than he motioned significantly to the mate to leave the boat.

"I cannot and will not voluntarily, Captain

Spike," answered Harry, calmly. "It would be committing a sort of suicide."

A sign brought two of the men to the captain's assistance. While the latter held Rose in her place, the sailors shoved Harry on the rock again. Had Mulford been disposed to resist, these two men could not very easily have ejected him from the boat, if they could have done it at all, but he knew there were others in reserve, and feared that blood might be shed in the irritated state of Spike, in the presence of Rose. While, therefore, he would not be accessory to his own destruction, he would not engage in what he knew would prove not only a most harassing, but a bootless resistance. The consequence was that the boats proceeded, leaving him alone on the rock.

It was perhaps fortunate for Rose that she fainted. Her condition occupied her aunt and Biddy, and Spike was enabled to reach his brig without any further interruption. Rose was taken on board still nearly insensible, while her two female companions were so much confused and distressed, that neither could have given a

reasonably clear account of what had just occurred. Not so with Jack Tier, however. That singular being noted all that passed, seated in the eyes of the boat, away from the confusion that prevailed in its stern-sheets, and apparently undisturbed by it.

As the party was sailing back toward the brig, the light-house boat towing the Swash's yawl, Jack took as good an observation of the channels of that part of the reef as his low position would allow. He tried to form in his mind a sort of chart of the spot, for, from the instant Mulford was thus deserted, the little fellow had formed a stern resolution to attempt his rescue. How that was to be done, however, was more than he yet knew; and when they reached the brig's side, Tier may be said to have been filled with good intentions, rather than with any very available knowledge to enable him to put them in execution.

As respects the two vessels, the arrival of Spike on board his own was not a moment too soon. The Poughkeepsie—for the stranger to the northward was now ascertained to be that sloop-of-war—was within long gun shot by this

time, and near enough to make certain, by means of her glasses, of the character of the craft with which she was closing. Luckily for the brig she lay in the channel so often mentioned, and through which both she and her present pursuer had so lately come, on their way to the northward. This brought her to windward, as the wind then stood, with a clear passage before her. Not a moment was lost. No sooner were the females sent below, than sail was made on the brig, and she began to beat through the passage, making long legs and short ones. She was chased, as a matter of course, and that hard, the difference in sailing between the two crafts not being sufficiently great to render the brigantine's escape by any means certain while absolutely within the range of those terrible missiles that were used by the man-of-war's men.

But Spike soon determined not to leave a point so delicate as that of his own and his vessel's security to be decided by a mere superiority in the way of heels. The Florida Reef, with all its dangers, windings, and rocks, was as well known to him as the entrances to the port

of New York. In addition to its larger channels, of which there are three or four, through which ships of size can pass, it had many others that would admit only vessels of a lighter draught of water. The brig was not flying light, it is true, but she was merely in good ballast trim, and passages would be available to her, into which the Poughkeepsie would not dare to venture. One of these lesser channels was favourably placed to further the escape of Spike, and he shoved the brig into it after the struggle had lasted less than an hour. This passage offered a shorter cut to the south side of the reef than the main channel, and the sloop-of-war, doubtless perceiving the uselessness of pursuit under such circumstances, wore round on her heel, and came down through the main channel again, just entering the open water, near the spot where the schooner had sunk, as the sun was setting.

CHAPTER X.

Shallow. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?
Evans. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.
Shallow. I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.
Evans. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.
SHAKSPEARE.

As for Spike, he had no intention of going to the southward of the Florida Reef again until his business called him there. The lost bag of doubloons was still gleaming before his imagination, and no sooner did the Poughkeepsie bear up, than he shortened sail, standing back and forth in his narrow and crooked channel, rather losing ground than gaining, though he took great pains not to let his artifice be seen. When the Poughkeepsie was so far to the northward as to render it safe, he took in everything but one or two of his lowest sails, and followed easily in the same direction. As the sloop-of-war carried her light and loftier sails, she remained visible to the people of the Swash long after the Swash had ceased to be visible to her. Profiting by this

circumstance, Spike entered the main channel again some time before it was dark, and selected a safe anchorage there that was well known to him; a spot where sufficient sand had collected on the coral to make good holding ground, and where a vessel would be nearly embayed, though always to windward of her channel going out, by the formation of the reef. Here he anchored, in order to wait until morning, ere he ventured further north. During the whole of that dreadful day, Rose had remained in her cabin, disconsolate, nearly unable, as she was absolutely unwilling, to converse. Now it was that she felt the total insufficiency of a mind feeble as that of her aunt's, to administer consolation to misery like her own. Nevertheless, the affectionate solicitude of Mrs. Budd, as well as that of the faithful creature, Biddy, brought some relief, and reason and resignation began slowly to resume their influence. Yet was the horrible picture of Harry, dying by inches, deserted in the midst of the waters on his solitary rock, ever present to her thoughts, until, once or twice, her feelings verged on madness. Prayer brought its customary relief,

however; and we do not think that we much exaggerate the fact, when we say that Rose passed fully one-half of that terrible afternoon on her knees.

As for Jack Tier, he was received on board the brig much as if nothing had happened. Spike passed and repassed him fifty times, without even an angry look, or a word of abuse; and the deputy steward dropped quietly into the duties of his office, without meeting with either reproach or hinderance. The only allusion, indeed, that was made to his recent adventures, took place in a conversation that was held on the subject in the galley, the interlocutors being Jack himself, Josh, the steward, and Simon, the cook.

"Where you been scullin' to, 'bout on dat reef, Jack, wid dem 'ere women, I won'er now?" demanded Josh, after tasting the cabin soup, in order to ascertain how near it was to being done. "I t'ink it no great fun to dodge 'bout among dem rock in a boat, for anudder hurricane might come when a body least expeck him."

"Oh," said Jack, cavalierly, "two hurricanes

no more come in one month, than two shot in the same hole. We've been turtlin', that 's all. I wish we had in your coppers, cook, some of the critturs that we fell in with in our cruise."

"Wish 'e had, master steward, wid all my heart," answered the fat, glistening potentate of the galley. "But, hark' ee, Jack, what became of our young mate, can 'e tell? Some say he get kill at 'e Dry Tortugas; and some say he war' skyllin' round in dat boat you hab. wid 'e young woman, eh?"

"Ah, boys," answered Jack, mournfully, "sure enough, what *has* become of him?"

"You know, why can't you tell? What good to hab secret among friend."

"*Are* ye his friends, lads? Do you really feel as if you could give a poor soul in its agony a helpin' hand?"

"Why not?" said Josh, in a reproachful way. "Misser Mulford 'e bess mate dis brig ever get; and I don't see why Captain Spike want to be rid of him."

"Because he's a willian!" returned Jack, between his grated teeth. "D' ye know what that means in English, master Josh; and can

you and cook here, both of whom have sailed with the man years in and years out, say whether my words be true or not?"

"Dat as a body understand 'em. Accordin' to some rule, Stephen Spike not a werry honest man; but, accordin' to 'nudder some, he as good as any body else."

"Yes, dat just de upshot of de matter," put in Simon, approvingly. "De whole case lie in dat meanin'."

"D' ye call it right to leave a human being to starve, or to suffer for water, on a naked rock, in the midst of the ocean?"

"Who do dat?"

"The willian who is captain of this brig; and all because he thinks young eyes and bloomin' cheeks prefer young eyes and bloomin' cheeks to his own grizzly beard and old look-outs."

"Dat bad; dat werry bad," said Josh, shaking his head, a way of denoting dissatisfaction, in which Simon joined him; for no crime appeared sufficiently grave in the eyes of these two sleek and well-fed officials to justify such a punishment. "Dat mons'ous bad, and cap'in

ought to know better dan do *dat*. I nebber starves a mouse, if I catches him in de bread-locker. Now, dat a sort of reason'ble punishment, too; but I nebber does it. If mouse eat my bread, it do seem right to tell mouse dat he hab enough, and dat he must not eat any more for a week, or a mon'; but it too cruel for me, and I nebber does it; no; I t'rows the little debbil overboard, and lets him drown like a gentle'em."

"Y-e-s," drawled out Simon, in a philanthropical tone of voice, "dat 'e best way. What good it do to torment a fellow crittur? If Misser Mulford run, why put him down run, and let him go, I say, on'y mulk his wages; but what good it do any body to starve him. Now, dis is my opinion, gentle'em; and dat is, dat starvation be wuss dan choleric. Choleric kill, I knows, and so does starvation kill; but of de two, gib me de choleric fuss; if I gets well of dat, den try starvation if you can."

"I'm glad to hear you talk in this manner, my hearties," put in Jack; "and I hope I shall find you accommodatin' in a plan I've got to help the maty out of this difficulty. As

a friend of Stephen Spike's I would do it; for it must be a terrible thing to die with such a murder on one's soul. Here 's the boat that we picked up at the light-house, yonder, in tow of the brig at this minute; and there 's everything in her comfortable for a good long run, as I know, from having sailed in her; and what I mean is this: as we left Mr. Mulford, I took the bearings and distance of the rock he was on, d 'ye understand, and think I could find my way back to it. You see the brig is travellin' slowly north ag'in, and afore long we shall be in the neighbourhood of that very rock. We, cook and stewards, will be called on to keep an anchor-watch, if the brig fetches up, as I heard the captain tell the Spanish gentleman he thought she would; and then we can take the boat that 's in the water, and go and have a hunt for the maty."

The two blacks looked at Tier earnestly; then they turned their heads to look at each other. The idea struck each as bold and novel; but each saw serious difficulties in it. At length Josh, as became his superior station, took on himself the office of expressing the objections that occurred to his mind.

"Dat nebber do!" exclaimed the steward. "We be 's quite willin' to sarve 'e mate, who 's a good gentle'em, and as nice a young man as ever sung out 'hard a lee;' but we must t'ink little bit of number one; or, for dat matter, of number two, as Simon would be implercated as well as myself. If Cap'in Spike once knew we 've lent a hand in sich a job, he 'd never overlook it. I knows him *well;* and that is sayin' as much as need be said of any man's character. You nebber catch *me* running myself into his jaws; would rather fight a shark widout any knife. No, no—I knows him *well.* Den comes anudder werry unanswerable objecsh'un, and dat is, dat 'e brig owe bot' Simon and I money. Fifty dollars, each on us, if she owe one cent. Now, do you t'ink in cander, Jack, dat two color' gentle'em, like us, can t'row away our fortins like two sons of a York merchant dat has inherited a hundred t'ousand dollars tudder day?"

"There is no occasion for runnin' at all, or for losing your wages."

"How you get 'e mate off, den? Can he walk away on de water? If so, let him go wid-

out us. A very good gentle'em is Misser Mulford, but not good enough to mulk Simon and me out of fifty dollars each."

"You will not hear my project, Josh, and so will never know what I would be at."

"Well, come, tell him jest as you surposes him. Now listen, Simon, so dat not a word be loss."

"My plan is to take the boat, if we anchor, as anchor I know we shall, and go and find the rock and bring Mr. Mulford off, then we can come back to the brig, and get on board ourselves, and let the mate sail away in the boat by himself. On this plan nobody will run, and no wages mulcted."

"But dat take time, and an anchor-watch will last but two hour, surposin' even dat 'ey puts all t'ree of us in de same watch."

"Spike usually does that, you know. 'Let the cook and the stewards keep the midnight watch,' he commonly says, 'and that will give the foremost hands a better snooze.'"

"Yes, he do say *dat*, Josh," put in Simon, "most ebbery time we comes-to."

"I know he does, and surposes he will say it

to-night, if he comes-to to night. But a two-hour-watch may not be long enough to do all you wants; and den, jest t'ink for a moment, should 'e cap'in come on deck, and hail 'e forecastle, and find us all gone, I wouldn't be in your skin, Jack, for dis brig, in sich a kerlamity. I knows Cap'n Spike well; t'ree time I indivor to run myself, and each time he bring me up wid a round turn; so, now-a-days, I nebber t'inks of sich a projeck any longer."

"But I do not intend to leave the forecastle without some one on it to answer a hail. No, all I want is a companion; for I do not like to go out on the reef at midnight, all alone. If one of you will go with me, the other can stay and answer the captain's hail, should he really come on deck in our watch—a thing very little likely to happen. When once his head is on his pillow, a'ter a hard day's work, it 's not very apt to be lifted ag'in without a call, or a squall. If you do know Stephen Spike *well*, Josh, I know him better."

"Well, Jack, dis here is a new idee, d' ye see, and a body must take time to consider on it. If Simon and I do ship for dis v'y'ge, 'twill

be for lub of Mr. Mulford, and not for *his* money or *your'n.*"

This was all the encouragement of his project Jack Tier could obtain, on that occasion, from either his brother steward, or from the cook. These blacks were well enough disposed to rescue an innocent and unoffending man from the atrocious death to which Spike had condemned him, but neither lost sight of his own security and interest. They promised Tier not to betray him, however; and he had the fullest confidence in their pledges. They who live together in common, usually understand the feeling that prevails on any given point in their own set; and Jack felt pretty certain that Harry was a greater favourite in and about the camboose than the captain. On that feeling he relied, and he was fain to wait the course of events, ere he came to any absolute conclusion as to his own course.

The interview in the galley took place about half an hour before the brig anchored for the night. Tier, who often assisted on such occasions, went aloft to help secure the royal, one of the gaskets which had got loose, and from

the yard he had an excellent opportunity to take a look at the reef, the situation of the vessel, and the probable bearings of the rock on which poor Mulford had been devoted to a miserable death. This opportunity was much increased by Spike's hailing him, while on the yard, and ordering him to take a good look at the sloop-of-war, and at the same time to ascertain if any boats were "prowlin' about, in order to make a set upon us in the night." On receiving this welcome order, Jack answered with a cheerful "Ay, ay, sir," and standing up on the yard, he placed an arm round the mast, and remained for a long time making his observations. The command to look out for boats would have been a sufficient excuse had he continued on the yard as long as it was light.

Jack had no difficulty in finding the Poughkeepsie, which was already through the passage, and no longer visible from the deck. She appeared to be standing to the northward and westward, under easy canvas, like a craft that was in no hurry. This fact was communicated to Spike in the usual way. The latter seemed pleased, and he answered in a hearty

manner, just as if no difficulty had ever occurred between him and the steward's assistant.

"Very well, Jack! bravo, Jack!—now, take a good look for boats; you'll have light enough for that this half hour," cried the captain. "If any are out, you'll find them pulling down the channel, or maybe they'll try to shorten the cut, by attempting to pull athwart the reef. Take a good and steady look for them, my man."

"Ay, ay, sir; I'll do all I can with naked eyes," answered Jack, "but I could do better, sir, if they would only send me up a glass by these here signal-halyards. With a glass, a fellow might speak with some sartainty."

Spike seemed struck with the truth of this suggestion; and he soon sent a glass aloft by the signal halyards. Thus provided, Jack descended as low as the cross-trees, where he took his seat, and began a survey at his leisure. While thus employed, the brig was secured for the night, her decks were cleared, and the people were ordered to get their suppers, previously to setting an anchor-watch, and turning-in for the night. No one heeded the

movements of Tier, with the exception of Josh and Simon, for Spike had gone into his own state-room. Those two worthies were still in the galley, conversing on the subject of Jack's recent communications, and ever and anon one of them would stick his head out of the door and look aloft, withdrawing it, and shaking it significantly, as soon as his observations were ended.

As for Tier, he was seated quite at his ease; and having slung his glass to one of the shrouds, in a way to admit of its being turned as on a pivot, he had every opportunity for observing accurately, and at his leisure. The first thing Jack did, was to examine the channel very closely, in order to make sure that no boats were in it; after which he turned the glass with great eagerness towards the reef, in the almost hopeless office of ascertaining something accurate concerning Mulford. In point of fact, the brig had anchored quite three leagues from the solitary rock of the deserted mate, and, favoured as he was by his elevation, Jack could hardly expect to discern so small and low an object as that rock at so great a

distance. Nevertheless, the glass was much better than common. It had been a present to Spike from one who was careful in his selections of such objects, and who had accidentally been under a serious obligation to the captain. Knowing the importance of a good look as regards the boats, Spike had brought this particular instrument, of which, in common, he was very chary, from his own state-room, and sent it aloft, in order that Jack might have every available opportunity of ascertaining his facts. It was this glass, then, which was the means of the important discoveries the little fellow, who was thus perched on the fore-top-mast cross-trees of the Swash, did actually succeed in making.

Jack actually started, when he first ascertained how distinctly and near the glass he was using brought distant objects. The gulls that sailed across its disk, though a league off, appeared as if near enough to be touched by the hand, and even their feathers gave out not only their hues, but their forms. Thus, too, was it with the surface of the ocean, of which the little waves that agitated the water of the

reef might be seen tossing up and down, at more than twice the range of the Poughkeepsie's heaviest gun. Naked rocks, low and subdued as they were in colour, too, were to be noted, scattered up and down in the panorama. At length Tier fancied his glass covered a field that he recognized. It was distant, but might be seen from his present elevation. A second look satisfied him he was right; and he next clearly traced the last channel in which they had endeavoured to escape from Spike, or that in which the boat had been taken. Following it along, by slowly moving the glass, he actually hit the rock on which Mulford had been deserted. It was peculiar in shape, size, and elevation above the water, and connected with the circumstance of the channel, which was easily enough seen by the colour of the water, and more easily from his height than if he had been in it, he could not be mistaken. The little fellow's heart beat quick as he made the glass move slowly over its surface, anxiously searching for the form of the mate. It was not to be seen. A second, and a more careful sweep of the glass, made it certain that the rock was deserted.

Although a little reflection might have satisfied any one Mulford was not to be sought in that particular spot, so long after he had been left there, Jack Tier felt grievously disappointed when he was first made certain of the accuracy of his observations. A minute later he began to reason on the matter, and he felt more encouraged. The rock on which the mate had been abandoned was smooth, and could not hold any fresh water that might have been left by the late showers. Jack also remembered that it had neither sea-weed nor shell-fish. In short, the utmost malice of Spike could not have selected, for the immolation of his victim, a more suitable place. Now Tier had heard Harry's explanation to Rose, touching the manner in which he had waded and swam about the reef that very morning, and it at once occurred to him that the young man had too much energy and spirit to remain helpless and inactive to perish on a naked rock, when there might be a possibility of at least prolonging existence, if not saving it. This induced the steward to turn the glass slowly over the water, and along all the ranges of

visible rock that he could find in that vicinity. For a long time the search was useless, the distance rendering such an examination not only difficult but painful. At length Jack, about to give up the matter in despair, took one sweep with the glass nearer to the brig, as much to obtain a general idea of the boat-channels of the reef, as in any hope of finding Mulford, when an object moving in the water came within the field of the glass. He saw it but for an instant, as the glass swept slowly past, but it struck him it was something that had life, and was in motion. Carefully going over the same ground again, after a long search, he again found what he so anxiously sought. A good look satisfied him that he was right. It was certainly a man wading along the shallow water of the reef, immersed to his waist—and it must be Mulford.

So excited was Jack Tier by this discovery that he trembled like a leaf. A minute or two elapsed before he could again use the glass; and when he did, a long and anxious search was necessary before so small an object could be once more found. Find it he did, however,

and then he got its range by the vessel, in a way to make sure of it. Yes, it was a man, and it was Mulford.

Circumstances conspired to aid Jack in this investigation that succeeded. The sun was near setting, but a stream of golden light gleamed over the waters, particularly illuminating the portion which came within the field of the glass. Then Harry, in his efforts to escape from the rock, and to get nearer to the edge of the main channel, where his chances of being seen and rescued would be tenfold what they were on his rock, had moved south, by following the naked reef and the shallow places, and was actually more than a league nearer to the brig than he would have been had he remained stationary. There had been hours in which to make this change, and the young man had probably improved them to the utmost.

Jack watched the form that was wading slowly along with an interest he had never before felt in the movements of any human being. Whether Mulford saw the brig or not it was difficult to say. She was quite two

leagues from him, and, now that her sails were furled, she offered but little for the eye to rest on at that distance. At first, Jack thought the young man was actually endeavouring to get nearer to her, though it must have been a forlorn hope that should again place him in the hands of Spike. It was, however, a more probable conjecture that the young man was endeavouring to reach the margin of the passage, where a good deal of rock was above water, and near to which he had already managed to reach. At one time Jack saw that the mate was obliged to swim, and he actually lost sight of him for a time. His form, however, reappeared, and then it slowly emerged from the water, and stood erect on a bare rock of some extent. Jack breathed freer at this; for Mulford was now on the very margin of the channel, and might be easily reached by the boat, should he prevail on Josh or Simon to attempt the rescue.

At first, Jack Tier fancied that Mulford had knelt to return thanks on his arrival at a place of comparative safety; but a second look satisfied him that Harry was drinking from one of

the little pools of fresh water left by the late shower. When he rose from drinking, the young man walked about the place, occasionally stooping, signs that he was picking up shell-fish for his supper. Suddenly, Mulford darted forward, and passed beyond the field of the glass. When Jack found him again, he was in the act of turning a small turtle, using his knife on the animal immediately after. Had Jack been in danger of starvation himself, and found a source of food as ample and as grateful as this, he could scarcely have been more delighted. The light now began to wane perceptibly, still Harry's movements could be discerned. The turtle was killed and dressed, sufficiently at least for the mate's purposes, and the latter was seen collecting sea-weed, and bits of plank, boards, and sticks of wood, of which more or less in drifting past had lodged upon the rocks. "Is it possible," thought Jack, "that he is so werry partic'lar he can't eat his turtle raw! Will he, indeed, venture to light a fire, or has he the means?" Mulford was so particular, however, he did venture to light a fire, and he had the means.

This may be said to be the age of matches,—not in a connubial, though in an inflammatory sense,—and the mate had a small stock in a tight box that he habitually carried on his person. Tier saw him at work over a little pile he had made for a long time, the beams of day departing now so fast as to make him fearful he should soon lose his object in the increasing obscurity of twilight. Suddenly a light gleamed, and the pile sent forth a clear flame. Mulford went to and fro, collecting materials to feed his fire, and was soon busied in cooking his turtle. All this Tier saw and understood, the light of the flames coming in proper time to supply the vacuum left by the departure of that of day.

In a minute Tier had no difficulty in seeing the fire that Mulford had lighted on his low and insulated domains with the naked eye. It gleamed brightly in that solitary place: and the steward was much afraid it would be seen by some one on deck, get to be reported to Spike, and lead to Harry's destruction after all. The mate appeared to be insensible to his danger, however, occasionally casting piles of dry sea-

weed on his fire, in a way to cause the flames to flash up, as if kindled anew by gunpowder. It now occurred to Tier that the young man had a double object in lighting this fire, which would answer not only the purposes of his cookery, but as a signal of distress to anything passing near. The sloop-of-war, though more distant than the brig, was in his neighbourhood; and she might possibly yet send relief. Such was the state of things when Jack was started by a sudden hail from below. It was in Spike's voice, and came up to him short and quick.

"Fore-topmast cross-trees there! What are ye about all this time, Master Jack Tier, in them fore-topmast cross-trees, I say?" demanded Spike.

"Keeping a look-out for boats from the sloop-of-war, as you bade me, sir," answered Jack, coolly.

"D'ye see any, my man? Is the water clear ahead of us or not?"

"It's getting to be so dark, sir, I can see no longer. While there was daylight, no boat was to be seen."

"Come down, man—come down; I've busi-

ness for you below. The sloop is far enough to the nor'ard, and we shall neither see nor hear from her to-night. Come down I say, Jack—come down."

Jack obeyed, and securing the glass, he began to descend the rigging. He was soon as low as the top, when he paused a moment to take another look. The fire was still visible, shining like a torch on the surface of the sea, casting its beams abroad like "a good deed in a naughty world." Jack was sorry to see it, though he once more took its bearing from the brig, in order that he might know where to find the spot, in the event of a search for it. When on the stretcher of the fore-rigging, Jack stopped, and again looked for the beacon. It had disappeared, having sunk below the circular formation of the earth. By ascending two or three ratlins, it came into view, and by going down as low as the stretcher again, it disappeared. Trusting that no one at that hour would have occasion to go aloft, Jack now descended to the deck, and went aft with the spy-glass.

Spike and the Señor Montefalderon were

under the coach-house, no one else appearing on any part of the quarter-deck. The people were eating their suppers and Josh and Simon were busy in the galley. As for the females, they chose to remain in their own cabin, where Spike was well pleased to leave them.

"Come this way, Jack," said the captain, in his best-humoured tone of voice; "I've a word to say to you. Put the glass in my state-room window, and come hither."

Tier did as ordered.

"So you can make out no boats to the nor'ard, ha, Jack? Nothing to be seen there-away."

"Nothing in the way of a boat, sir."

"Ay, ay, I daresay there's plenty of water, and some rock. The Florida Reef has no scarcity of either, to them that knows where to look for one, and steer clear of the other. Hark'e, Jack; so you got the schooner under way from the Dry Tortugas, and undertook to beat her up to Key West, when she fancied herself a turtle, and over she went with you,—is that it, my man?"

"The schooner turned turtle with us, sure

enough, sir; and we all came near drowning on her bottom."

"No sharks in that latitude and longitude, eh, Jack?"

"Plenty on 'em sir; and I thought they would have got us all, at one time. More than twenty set of fins were in sight at once, for several hours."

"You could hardly have supplied the gentlemen with a leg, or an arm, each. But where was the boat all this time,—you had the light-house boat in tow, I suppose?"

"She had been in tow, sir; but Madame Budd talked so much dictionary to the painter, that it got adrift."

"Yet I found you all in it."

"Very true, sir. Mr. Mulford swam quite a mile to reach the rocks, and found the boat aground on one on 'em. As soon as he got the boat, he made sail, and came and took us off. We had reason to thank God he could do so."

Spike looked dark and thoughtful. He muttered the words "swam," and "rocks," but was too cautious to allow any expression to

escape him, that might betray to the Mexican officer that which was uppermost in his mind. He was silent, however, for quite a minute, and Jack saw that he had awakened a dangerous source of distrust in the captain's breast.

"Well, Jack," resumed Spike, after the pause, "can you tell us anything of the doubloons. I nat'rally expected to find them in the boat, but there were none to be seen. You scarcely pumped the schooner out, without overhauling her lockers, and falling in with them doubloons?"

"We found them, sure enough, and had them ashore with us, in the tent, down to the moment when we sailed."

"When you took them off to the schooner, eh? My life for it, the gold was not forgotten."

"It was not, sure enough, sir; but we took it off with us to the schooner, and it went down in her when she finally sunk."

Another pause, during which Señor Montefalderon and Captain Spike looked significantly at each other.

"Do you think, Jack, you could find the spot where the schooner went down?"

"I could come pretty near it, sir, though not on the very spot itself. Water leaves no mark over the grave of a sunken ship."

"If you can take us within a reasonable distance, we might find it by sweeping for it. Them doubloons are worth some trouble; and their recovery would be better than a long v'y'age to us, any day."

"They would, indeed, Don Estaban," observed the Mexican; "and my poor country is not in a condition to bear heavy losses. If Señor Jack Tier can find the wreck, and we regain the money, ten of those doubloons shall be his reward, though I take them from my own share, much diminished as it will be."

"You hear, Jack,—here is a chance to make your fortune! You say you sailed with me in old times—and old times were good times with this brig, though times has changed; but if you sailed with me in *old* times, you must remember that whatever the Swash touched she turned to gold."

"I hope you don't doubt, Captain Spike, my having sailed in the brig, not only in old times, but in her best times?"

Jack seemed hurt as he put this question, and Spike appeared in doubt. The latter gazed at the little, rotund, queer-looking figure before him, as if endeavouring to recognize him; and when he had done, he passed his hand over his brow, like one who endeavoured to recall past objects, by excluding those that are present.

"You will then show us the spot where my unfortunate schooner did sink, Señor Jack Tier?" put in the Mexican.

"With all my heart, señor, if it is to be found. I think I could take you within a cable's length of the place, though hunger, and thirst, and sharks, and the fear of drowning, will keep a fellow from having a very bright look-out for such a matter."

"In what water do you suppose the craft to lie, Jack?" demanded the captain.

"You know as much of that as I do myself, sir. She went down about half a cable's length from the reef, towards which she was a settin' at the time; and had she kept afloat an hour longer, she might have grounded on the rocks."

"She 's better where she is, if we can only find her by sweeping. On the rocks we could

do nothing with her but break her up, and ten to one the doubloons would be lost. By the way, Jack, do you happen to know where that scoundrel of a mate of mine stowed the money?"

"When we left the island, I carried it down to the boat myself,—and a good lift I had of it. As sure as you are there, señor, I was obliged to take it on a shoulder. When it came out of the boat, Mr. Mulford carried it below, and I heard him tell Miss Rose, a'terwards, that he had thrown it into a bread-locker."

"Where we shall find it, Don Wan, notwithstanding all this veering and hauling. The old brig has luck, when doubloons are in question, and ever has had since I've commanded her. Jack, we shall have to call on the cook and stewards for an anchor-watch to-night. The people are a good deal fagged with boxing about this reef so much, and I shall want 'em all as fresh to-morrow as they can be got. You idlers had better take the middle-watches, which will give the forecastle chaps longer naps."

"Ay, ay, sir; we'll manage that for 'em.

Josh and Simon can go on at twelve, and I shall take the watch at two, which will give the men all the rest they want, as I can hold out for four hours full. I'm as good for an anchor-watch as any man in the brig, Captain Spike."

"That you are, Jack, and better than some on 'em. Take you all round, and round it is, you're a rum 'un, my lad,—the queerest little jigger that ever lay out on a royal yard."

Jack might have been a little offended at Spike's compliments, but he was certainly not sorry to find him so good-natured, after all that had passed. He now left the captain and his Mexican companion, seemingly in close conference together, while he went below himself, and dropped as naturally into the routine of his duty, as if he had never left the brig. In the cabin he found the females, of course, Rose scarce raising her face from the shawl which lay on the bed of her own berth. Jack busied himself in a locker near this berth, until an opportunity occurred to touch Rose, unseen by her aunt or Biddy. The poor heart-stricken girl raised her face, from which all the colour had departed, and looked almost vacantly at

Jack, as if to ask an explanation. Hope is truly, by a most benevolent provision of Providence, one of the very last blessings to abandon us. It is probable that we are thus gifted, in order to encourage us to rely on the great atonement till the last moment, since, without this natural endowment to cling to hope, despair might well be the fate of millions, who, there is reason to think, reap the benefit of that act of divine mercy. It would hardly do to say that anything like hope was blended with the look Rose now cast on Jack, but it was anxious and inquiring.

The steward bent his head to the locker, bringing his face quite near to that of Rose, and whispered,—"There is hope, Miss Rose; but do not betray me."

These were blessed words for our heroine to hear, and they produced an immediate and great revolution in her feelings. Commanding herself, however, she looked her questions, instead of trusting even to a whisper. Jack did not say any more just then, but, shortly after, he called Rose, whose eyes were now never off him, into the main cabin, which was

empty. It was so much pleasanter to sleep in an airy state-room on deck, that Señor Montefalderon, indeed, had given up the use of this cabin, in a great measure, seldom appearing in it, except at meals, having taken possession of the deserted apartment of Mulford. Josh was in the galley, where he spent most of his time, and Rose and Jack had no one to disturb their conference.

"He is safe, Miss Rose,—God be praised!" whispered Jack. "Safe for the present, at least; with food and water, and fire to keep him warm at night."

It was impossible for Rose not to understand to whom there was allusion, though her head became dizzy under the painful confusion that prevailed in it. She pressed her temples with both hands, and asked a thousand questions with her eyes. Jack considerately handed her a glass of water before he proceeded. As soon as he found her a little more composed, he related the facts connected with his discovery of Mulford, precisely as they had occurred.

"He is now on a large rock,—a little island, indeed,—where he is safe from the ocean, unless

it comes on to blow a hurricane," concluded Jack; "has fresh water and fresh turtle in the bargain. A man might live a month on one such turtle as I saw Mr. Mulford cutting up this evening."

"Is there no way of rescuing him from the situation you have mentioned, Jack? In a year or two I shall be my own mistress, and have money to do as I please with; put me only in the way of taking Mr. Mulford from that rock, and I will share all I am worth on earth with you, dear Jack."

"Ay, so it is with the whole sex," muttered Tier; "let them only once give up their affections to a man, and he becomes dearer to them than pearls and rubies! But you know me, Miss Rose, and know *why* and *how well* I would sarve you. My story and my feelin's are as much your secret, as your story and your feelin's is mine. We shall pull together, if we don't pull so very strong. Now, hearken to me, Miss Rose, and I will let you into the secret of my plan to help Mr. Mulford make a launch."

Jack Tier communicated to his companion

his whole project for the night. Spike had, of his own accord, given to him and his two associates, Simon and Josh, the care of the brig between midnight and morning. If he could prevail on either of these men to accompany him, it was his intention to take the light-house boat, which was riding by its painter astern of the brig, and proceed as fast as they could to the spot whither Mulford had found his way. By his calculations, if the wind stood as it then was, little more than an hour would be necessary to reach the rock, and about as much more to return. Should the breeze lull, of which there was no great danger, since the easterly trades were again blowing, Jack thought he and Josh might go over the distance with the oars in about double the time. Should both Josh and Simon refuse to accompany him, he thought he should attempt the rescue of the mate alone, did the wind stand, trusting to Mulford's assistance, should he need it, in getting back to the brig.

"You surely would not come back here with Harry, did you once get him safe from off that rock," exclaimed Rose.

"Why, you know how it is with me, Miss Rose," answered Jack. "*My* business is here, on board the Swash, and I must attend to it. Nothing shall tempt me to give up the brig so long as she floats, and sartain folk float in her, unless it might be some such matter as that which happened on the bit of an island at the Dry Tortugas. Ah! he's a willian! But if I do come back, it will be only to get into my own proper berth ag'in, and not to bring Mr. Mulford into the lion's jaws. He will only have to put me back on board the Molly here, when he can make the best of his own way to Key West. Half an hour would place him out of harm's way; especially as I happen to know the course Spike means to steer in the morning."

"I will go with you, Jack," said Rose, mildly, but with great firmness.

"You, Miss Rose! But why should I shew surprise? It's like all the sex, when they have given away their affections. Yes, woman will be woman, put her on a naked rock, or put her in silks and satins in her parlour at home. How different is it with men! They dote for a little

while, and turn to a new face. It must be said, men 's willians!"

"Not Mulford, Jack,—no, not Harry Mulford! A truer or a nobler heart never beat in a human breast; and you and I will drown together, rather than he should not be taken from that rock."

"It shall be as you say," answered Jack, a little thoughtfully. "Perhaps it would be best that you should quit the brig altogether. Spike is getting desperate, and you will be safer with the young mate than with so great an old willian. Yes, you shall go with me, Miss Rose; and if Josh and Simon both refuse, we will go alone."

"With you, Jack, but not with Mr. Mulford. I cannot desert my aunt, nor can I quit the Swash alone in company with her mate. As for Spike, I despise him too much to fear him. He must soon go into port somewhere, and at the first place where he touches we shall quit him. He dare not detain us,—nay, he *cannot*, —and I do not fear him. We shall save Harry, but I shall remain with my aunt."

"We 'll see, Miss Rose, we 'll see," said Tier

smiling. Perhaps a handsome young man, like Mr. Mulford, will have better luck in persuading you than an old fellow like me. If he should fail, 'twill be his own fault."

So thought Jack Tier, judging of women as he had found them; but so did not think Rose Budd. The conversation ended here, however, each keeping in view its purport, and the serious business that was before them.

The duty of the vessel went on as usual. The night promised to be clouded, but not very dark, as there was a moon. When Spike ordered the anchor-watches, he had great care to spare his crew as much as possible, for the next day was likely to be one of great toil to them. He intended to get the schooner up again, if possible; and though he might not actually pump her out so as to cause her to float, enough water was to be removed to enable him to get at the doubloons. The situation of the bread-locker was known, and as soon as the cabin was sufficiently freed from water to enable one to move about in it, Spike did not doubt his being able to get at the gold. With his resources and ingenuity, the matter in

his own mind was reduced to one of toil and time. Eight-and-forty hours, and some hard labour, he doubted not would effect all he cared for.

In setting the anchor-watches for the night, therefore, Stephen Spike bethought him as much of the morrow as of the present moment. Don Juan offered to remain on deck until midnight, and as he was as capable of giving an alarm as any one else, the offer was accepted. Josh and Simon were to succeed the Mexican, and to hold the look-out for two hours, when Jack was to relieve them, and to continue on deck until light returned, when he was to give the captain a call. This arrangement made, Tier turned in at once, desiring the cook to call him half an hour before the proper period of his watch commenced. That half hour Jack intended to employ in exercising his eloquence in endeavouring to persuade either Josh or Simon to be of his party. By eight o'clock the vessel lay in a profound quiet, Señor Montefalderon pacing the quarter-deck alone, while the deep breathing of Spike was to be heard issuing through the open window

of his state-room; a window which, it may be well to say to the uninitiated, opened in-board, or toward the deck, and not out-board, or toward the sea.

For four solitary hours did the Mexican pace the deck of the stranger, resting himself for a few minutes at a time only, when wearied with walking. Does the reader fancy that a man so situated had not plenty of occupation for his thoughts? Don Juan Montefalderon was a soldier and a gallant cavalier, and love of country had alone induced him to engage in his present duties. Not that patriotism which looks to political preference through a popularity purchased by the vulgar acclamation which attends success in arms, even when undeserved, or that patriotism which induces men of fallen character to endeavour to retrieve former offences by the shortest and most reckless mode, or that patriotism which shouts, "our country, right or wrong," regardless alike of God and his eternal laws, that are never to be forgotten with impunity; but the patriotism which would defend his home and fireside, his altars and the graves of his fathers, from the

ruthless steps of the invader. We shall not pretend to say how far this gentleman entered into the merits of the quarrel between the two republics, which no arts of European jealousy can ever conceal from the judgment of truth, for with him matters had gone beyond the point when men feel the necessity of reasoning, and when, perhaps, if such a condition of the mind is ever to be defended, he found his perfect justification in feeling. He had travelled, and knew life by observation, and not through traditions and books. He had never believed, therefore, that his countrymen could march to Washington, or even to the Sabine; but he had hoped for better things than had since occurred. The warlike qualities of the Americans of the North, as he was accustomed to call those who term themselves, *par excellence*, Americans, a name they are fated to retain, and to raise high on the scale of national power and national preeminence, unless they fall by their own hands, had taken him by surprise, as they had taken all but those who knew the country well, and who understood its people. Little had he imagined that the small widely-spread body of

regulars that figured in the blue-books, almanacs, and army-registers of America, as some six or seven thousand men, scattered along frontiers of a thousand leagues in extent, could, at the beck of the government, swell into legions of invaders, men able to carry war to the capitals of their own States, thousands of miles from their doors, and formidable alike for their energy, their bravery, their readiness in the use of arms, and their numbers. He saw what is perhaps justly called the boasting of the American character, vindicated by their exploits; and marches, conquests, and victories, that, if sober truth were alone to cover the pages of history, would far outdo in real labour and danger the boasted passages of the Alps, under Napoleon, and the exploits that succeeded it.

Don Juan Montefalderon was a grave and thoughtful man, of pure Iberian blood. He might have had about him a little of the exaltation of the Spanish character; the overflowings of a generous chivalry at the bottom; and, under its influence, he may have set too high an estimate on Mexico and her sons, but he

was not one to shut his eyes to truth. He saw plainly that the northern neighbours of his country were a race formidable and enterprising, and that of all the calumnies that had been heaped upon them by rivalries and European superciliousness, that of their not being military by temperament, was, perhaps, the most absurd of all. On the contrary, he had himself, though anticipating evil, been astounded by the suddenness and magnitude of their conquests, which, in a few short months after the breaking out of hostilities, had overrun regions larger than many ancient empires. All this had been done, too, not by disorderly and barbarous hordes, seeking abroad the abundance that was wanting at home; but with system and regularity, by men who had turned the ploughshare into the sword for the occasion, quitting abundance to encounter fatigue, famine, and danger. In a word, the Señor Montefalderon saw all the evils that environed his own land, and foresaw others, of a still graver character, that menaced the future. On matters such as these did he brood in his walk, and bitter did he find the minutes of that sad

and lonely watch. Although a Mexican, he could feel; although an avowed foe of this good republic of ours, he had his principles, his affections, and his sense of right. Whatever may be the merits of the quarrel,—and we are not disposed to deny that our provocation has been great,—a sense of right should teach every man that what may be patriotic in an American, would not be exactly the same thing in a Mexican; and that we ought to respect in others sentiments that are so much vaunted among ourselves. Midnight at length arrived, and, calling the cook and steward, the unhappy gentleman was relieved, and went to his berth to dream, in sorrow, over the same pictures of national misfortunes on which, while waking, he had brooded in such deep melancholy.

The watch of Josh and Simon was tranquil, meeting with no interruption until it was time to summon Jack. One thing these men had done, however, that was of some moment to Tier, under a pledge given by Josh, and which had been taken in return for a dollar in hand. They had managed to haul the light-house boat alongside, from its position astern, and this so

noiselessly as not to give the alarm to any one. There it lay, when Jack appeared, ready at the main-rigging to receive him at any moment he might choose to enter it.

A few minutes after Jack appeared on deck, Rose and Biddy came stealthily out of the cabin, the latter carrying a basket filled with bread and broken meat, and not wanting in sundry little delicacies, such as woman's hands prepare, and, in this instance, woman's tenderness had provided. The whole party met at the galley, a place so far removed from the state-rooms aft as to be out of ear-shot. Here Jack renewed his endeavours to persuade either Josh or Simon to go in the boat, but without success. The negroes had talked the matter over together in their watch, and had come to the conclusion the enterprise was too hazardous.

"I tell you, Jack, you does n't know Capt'in Spike as well as I does," Josh said, in continuance of the discourse. "No, you does n't know him at all as well as I does. If he finds out that anybody has quit dis brig dis werry night, woful will come! It no good to try to run [illegible]

run t'rec time, an' Simon here run twice. What good it all do? We got cotched, and here we is, just as fast as ever. I knows Captain Spike, and does n't want to fall in athwart his hawse any more."

"Y-e-s, dat my judgment, too," put in the cook. "We wishes you well, Jack, and we wishes Miss Rose well, and Mr. Mulford well, but we can't, no how, run ath'art hawse, as Josh says. Dat is my judgment, too."

"Well, if your minds are made up to this, my darkies, I s'pose there 'll be no changing them," said Jack. "At all ewents you 'll lend a hand, by answering any hail that may come from aft, in my watch, and in keepin' our secret. There 's another thing you can do for us, which may be of sarvice. Should Captain miss the boat, and lay any trap to catch us, you can just light this her bit of a lantern and hang it over the brig's bows, where he 'll not be likely to see it, that we may know matters are going wrong, and give the craft a wide berth."

"Sartain," said Josh, who entered heartily into the affair, so far as good wishes for its success were concerned, at the very moment

when he had a most salutary care of his own back. "Sartain; we do all dat, and no t'ank asked. It no great matter to answer a hail, or to light a lantern and sling him over de bows; and if Capt'n Spike want to know who did it, let him find out."

Here both negroes laughed heartily, manifesting so little care to suppress their mirth, that Rose trembled lest their noise should awaken Spike. Accustomed sounds, however, seldom produce this effect on the ears of the sleeper, and the heavy breathing from the state-room succeeded the merriment of the blacks, as soon as the latter ceased. Jack now announced his readiness to depart. Some little care and management were necessary to get into the boat noiselessly, more especially with Biddy. It was done, however, with the assistance of the blacks, who cast off the painter, when Jack gave the boat a shove to clear the brig, and suffered it to drop astern for a considerable distance before he ventured to cast loose the sail.

"I know Spike well," said Jack, in answer to a remonstrance from the impatient Rose

concerning his delay. "A single flap of that canvas would wake him up, with the brig anchored, while he would sleep through a salute of heavy guns if it came in regular course. Quick ears has old Stephen, and it's best to humour them. In a minute more we'll set canvas and be off."

All was done as Jack desired, and the boat got away from the brig unheard and undetected. It was blowing a good breeze, and Jack Tier had no sooner got the sail on the boat, than away it started at a speed that would have soon distanced Spike in his yawl, and with his best oarsmen. The main point was to keep the course, though the direction of the wind was a great assistant. By keeping the wind abeam Jack thought he should be going toward the rock of Mulford. In one hour, or even in less time, he expected to reach it, and he was guided by time in his calculations, as much as by any other criterion. Previously to quitting the brig, he had gone up a few ratlins of the fore-rigging to take the bearings of the fire on Mulford's rock, but the light was no longer visible. As no star was to be seen, the course was a

little vague, but Jack was navigator enough to understand that by keeping on the weather-side of the channel he was in the right road, and that his great danger of missing his object was in over-running it.

So much of the reef was above water, that it was not difficult to steer a boat along its margin. The darkness, to be sure, rendered it a little uncertain how near they were running to the rocks; but, on the whole, Jack assured Rose he had no great difficulty in getting along.

"These trades are almost as good as compasses," he said, "and the rocks are better, if we can keep close aboard them without going on to them. I do not know the exact distance of the spot we seek from the brig, but I judged it to be about two leagues, as I looked at it from aloft. Now, this boat will travel them two leagues in an hour, with this breeze and in smooth water."

"I wish you had seen the fire again before we left the brig," said Rose, too anxious for the result not to feel uneasiness on some account or other.

"The mate is asleep, and the fire has burnt down; that 's the explanation. Besides, fuel is not too plenty on a place like that Mr. Mulford inhabits just now. As we get near the spot, I shall look out for embers, which may sarve as a light-house, or beacon, to guide us into port."

"Mr. Mulford will be charmed to see us, now that we take him wather!" exclaimed Biddy. "Wather is a blessed thing, and it 's hard will be the heart that does not fale gratitude for a plenthy of swate wather."

"The maty has plenty of food and water where he is," said Jack; "I 'll answer for both them sarcumstances. I saw him turn a turtle as plain as if I had been at his elbow; and I saw him drinking at a hole in the rock, as heartily as a boy ever pulled at a gimlet-hole in a molasses hogshead."

"But the distance was so great, Jack, I should hardly think you could have distinguished objects so small."

"I went by the motions altogether. I saw the man, and I saw the movements, and I knowed what the last meant. It 's true I

could n't swear to the turtle, though I saw something on the rock that I knowed, by the way in which it was handled, *must* be a turtle. Then I saw the mate kneel, and put his head low, and then I knowed he was drinking."

"Perhaps he prayed," said Rose, solemnly.

"Not he. Sailors is n't so apt to pray, Miss Rose; not as apt as they ought to be. Women for prayers, and men for work. Mr. Mulford is no worse than many others, but I doubt if he be much given to *that*."

To this Rose made no answer, but Biddy took the matter up, and, as the boat went briskly ahead, she pursued the subject.

"Then more is the shame for him," said the Irish woman; "and Miss Rose, and missus, and even I prayin' *for* him, all as if he was our own brudder. It 's seldom I ask anything for a heretic, but I could not forget a fine young man like Mr. Mulford, and Miss Rose so partial to him, and he in so bad a way. He ought to be ashamed to make his brags that he is not proud to pray."

"Harry has made no such wicked b[oast]

put in Rose, mildly; "nor do we know that he has not prayed for us, as well as for himself. It may all be a mistake of Jack's, you know."

"Yes," added Jack, coolly, "it *may* be a mistake, a'ter all, for I was lookin' at the maty six miles off, and through a spy-glass. No one can be sure of anything at such a distance. So overlook the matter, my good Biddy, and carry Mr. Mulford the nice things you've mustered in that basket, all the same as if he was pope."

"This is a subject we had better drop," Rose quietly observed."

"Anything to oblige you, Miss Rose, though religion is a matter it would do me no harm to talk about once and awhile. It's many a long year since I've had time and opportunity to bring my thoughts to dwell on holy things. Ever since I left my mother's side, I've been a wanderer in my mind as much as in my body."

"Poor Jack! I understand and feel for your sufferings; but a better time will come, when you may return to the habits of your youth, and to the observances of your church."

"I don't know that, Miss Rose; I don't know that," answered Tier, placing the elbow

of his short arm on the knee of a seemingly shorter leg, and bending his head so low as to lean his face on the palm of the hand, an attitude in which he appeared to be suffering keenly through his recollections. "Childhood and innocence never come back to us in this world. What the grave may do we shall all learn in time."

"Innocence can return to all with repentance, Jack; and the heart that prompts you to do acts as generous as this you are now engaged in, must contain some good seed yet."

"If Jack will go to a praste and just confess, when he can find a father, it will do his sowl good," said Biddy, who was touched by the mental suffering of the strange little being at her side.

But the necessity of managing the boat soon compelled its cockswain to raise his head, and to attend to his duty. The wind sometimes came in puffs, and at such moments Jack saw that the large sail of the light-house boat required watching, a circumstance that induced him to shake off his melancholy, and give his mind more exclusively to the business before

him. As for Rose, she sympathized deeply with Jack Tier, for she knew his history, his origin, the story of his youth, and the well-grounded causes of his contrition and regrets. From her, Jack had concealed nothing; the gentle commiseration of one like Rose being a balm to wounds that had bled for long and bitter years. The great poet of our language, and the greatest that ever lived, perhaps, short of the inspired writers of the Old Testament, and old Homer and Dante, has well reminded us that the "little beetle," in yielding its breath, "feels a pang as great as when a giant dies." Thus is it, too, in morals. Abasement, and misery, and poverty, and sin, may, and all do, contribute to lower the tone of our moral existence; but the principle that has been planted by nature, can be eradicated by nature only. It exists as long as we exist; and, if dormant for a time, under the pressure of circumstances, it merely lies, in the moral system, like the acorn or the chesnut, in the ground, waiting its time and season to sprout, and bud, and blossom. Should that time never arrive, it is not because the seed is not there, but because it is

neglected. Thus was it with the singular being of whose feelings we have just spoken. The germ of goodness had been implanted early in him, and was nursed with tenderness and care, until, self-willed, and governed by passion, he had thrown off the connections of youth and childhood, to connect himself with Spike,—a connection that had left him what he was. Before closing our legend, we shall have occasion to explain it.

"We have run our hour, Miss Rose," resumed Jack, breaking a continued silence, during which the boat had passed through a long line of water; "we have run our hour, and ought to be near the rock we are in search of. But the morning is so dark that I fear we shall have difficulty in finding it. It will never do to run past it, and we may haul closer in to the reef, and shorten sail, that we may be sartain to make no such mistake."

Rose begged her companion to omit no precaution, as it would be dreadful to fail in their search, after incurring so much risk in their own persons.

"Harry may be sleeping on the sea-weed of

which you spoke," she added, "and the danger of passing him will be much increased in such a case. What a gloomy and frightful spot is this in which to abandon a human being. I fear, Jack, that we have come faster than we have supposed, and may already have passed the rock."

"I hope not, Miss Rose. It seemed to me a good two leagues to the place where I saw him, and the boat is fast that will run two leagues in an hour."

"We do not know the time, Jack, and are obliged to guess at that as well as at the distance. How very dark it is!"

Dark, in one sense, it was not, though Rose's apprehensions, doubtless, induced her to magnify every evil. The clouds certainly lessened the light of the moon, but there was still enough of the last to enable one to see surrounding objects, and most especially to render distinct the character of the solitude that reigned over the place.

The proximity of the reef, which formed a weather-shore to the boat, prevented anything like a swell on the water, notwithstanding the

steadiness and strength of the breeze, which had now blown for near twenty-four hours. The same wind in open water, would have raised sea enough to cause a ship to pitch, or roll, whereas, the lighthouse boat, placed where she was, scarce rose and fell under the undulations of the channel through which she was glancing.

"This is a good boat, and a fast boat, too," observed Jack Tier, after he had luffed up several minutes, in order to make sure of his proximity to the reef; "and it might carry us all safe enough to Key West, or certainly back to the Dry Tortugas, was we inclined to try our hands at either."

"I cannot quit my aunt," said Rose quickly; "so we will not even think of any such thing."

"No, 'twould never do to abandon the missus," said Biddy, "and she on the wreck wid us, and falin' the want of wather as much as ourselves."

"We three have sartainly gone through much in company," returned Jack, "and it ought to make us friends for life."

"I trust it will, Jack; I hope, when we

return to New York, to see you among us, anchored, as you would call it, for the rest of your days under my aunt's roof, or under my own, should I ever have one."

"No, Miss Rose, my business is with the Swash and her captain. I shall stick by both, now I 've found 'em again, until they once more desert me. A man's duty is *his* duty, and a woman's duty is *her* duty."

"You seem to like the brig and her captain, Jack Tier," observed Biddy, "and there's no use in gainsaying such a likin.' What *will* come to pass, must come to pass. Captain Spike is a mighty great sailor, anyway."

"He 's a willian," muttered Jack.

"There!" cried Rose, almost breathless, "there is a rock above the water, surely. Do not fly by it so swiftly, Jack, but let us stop and examine it."

"There is a rock, sure enough, and a large piece it is," answered Tier. "We will go alongside of it, and see what it is made of. Biddy shall be boat-keeper, while you and I, Miss Rose, explore."

Jack had thrown the boat into the wind, and

was shooting close alongside the reef, even while speaking. The party found no difficulty in landing, the margin of the rock admitting the boat to lie close alongside of it, and its surface being even and dry. Jack had brailed the sail, and he brought the painter ashore, and fastened it securely to a fragment of stone, that made a very sufficient anchor. In addition to this precaution, a lazy painter was put into Biddy's hands, and she was directed not to let go of it while her companions were absent. These arrangements concluded, Rose and Jack commenced a hurried examination of the spot.

A few minutes sufficed to give our adventurers a tolerably accurate notion of the general features of the place on which they had landed. It was a considerable portion of the reef that was usually above water, and which had even some fragments of soil, or sand, on which was a stinted growth of bushes. Of these last, however, there were very few, nor were there many spots of the sand. Drift-wood and sea-weed were lodged in considerable quantities about its margin, and, in places, piles of both had been

tossed upon the rock itself, by the billows of former gales of wind. Nor was it long before Jack discovered a turtle that had been up to a hillock of sand, probably to deposit its eggs. There was enough of the sportsman in Jack, notwithstanding the business he was on, to turn this animal; though with what object, he might have been puzzled himself to say. This exploit effected, Jack followed Rose as fast as his short legs would permit, our heroine pressing forward eagerly, though almost without hope, in order to ascertain if Mulford were there.

"I am afraid this is not the rock," said Rose, nearly breathless with her own haste, when Jack had overtaken her. "I see nothing of him, and we have passed over most of the place."

"Very true, Miss Rose," answered her companion, who was in a good humour on account of his capture of the turtle; but there are other rocks, besides this. Ha! what was that yonder?" pointing with a finger; "here, more towards the brig. As I am a sinner, there was a flashing, as of fire."

"If a fire, it must be that made by Harry. Let us go to the spot at once."

Jack led the way, and, sure enough, he soon reached a place where the embers of what had been a considerable body of fire, were smouldering on the rock. The wind had probably caused some brand to kindle momentarily, which was the object that had caught Tier's eye. No doubt any longer remained of their having found the very place where the mate had cooked his supper, and lighted his beacon, though he himself was not near it. Around these embers were all the signs of Mulford's having made the meal of which Jack had seen the preparations. A portion of the turtle, much the greater part of it indeed, lay in its shell; and piles of wood and sea-weed, both dry, had been placed at hand, ready for use. A ship's topgallant-yard, with most of its ropes attached, lay with a charred end near the fire, or where the fire had been, the wood having burned until the flames went out for want of contact with other fuel. There were many pieces of branches of pitch-pine in the adjacent heap, and two or three beautiful plants of the same wood, entire. In short, from the character and quantity of the materials of this nature that had thus been

heaped together, Jack gave it as his opinion that some vessel, freighted with lumber, had been wrecked to windward, and that the adjacent rocks had been receiving the tribute of her cargo. Wrecks are of very, very frequent occurrence in the Florida Reef; and there are always moments when such gleanings are to be made in some part of it or other.

"I see no better way to give a call to the mate, Miss Rose, than to throw some of this dry weed, and some of this lumber, on the fire," said Jack, after he had rummaged about the place sufficiently to become master of its condition. "There is plenty of ammunition, and here goes for a broadside."

Jack had no great difficulty in effecting his object. In a few minutes he succeeded in obtaining a flame, and then he fed it with such fragments of the brands and boards as were best adapted to his purpose. The flames extended gradually, and by the time that Tier had dragged the topgallant-yard over the pile, and placed several planks on their edges, alongside of it, the whole was ready to burst into a blaze. The light was shed athwart the rock

for a long distance, and the whole place, which was lately so gloomy and obscure, now became gay, under the bright radiance of a blazing fire.

"There is a beacon-light that might almost be seen on board!" said Jack, exulting in his success. "If the mate is anywhere in this latitude, he will soon turn up."

"I see nothing of him," answered Rose, in a melancholy voice. "Surely, surely, Jack, he cannot have left the rock just as we have come to rescue him."

Rose and her companion had turned their faces from the fire to look in an opposite direction in quest of him they sought. Unseen by them, a human form advanced swiftly toward the fire, from a point on its other side. It advanced nearer, then hesitated, afterwards rushed forward with a tread that caused the two to turn, and at the next moment Rose was clasped to the heart of Mulford.

END OF VOL. II.

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